

Thro' life's first journey, when each varying scene
Makes deep impresson on the pliant heart.

Albert was universally below'd :

Patron of sorrow's numerous family,

He liv'd but to do good. His tale is sad ;

Yet must the muse perform the destin'd task,

To shew how Seymour first became his care ;

And if the theme of sorrow intervene

Too frequent, let compassion drop a tear,

Nor grudge the tribute which so grateful yields

Sensations sympathy delights to feel.

In former days, when life was in its spring,

He liv'd like many weak unthinking youth,

To fashion and to pleasure ; heeding not

The fond advice by doating parents given,

Which flow'd from bosoms where indulgent love,

And anxious wishes for a darling son,

Were constant guests. But, ah ! the sneering

laugh,

The jeers of gay companions overcame.

He sacrific'd a father's peace of mind,

A mother's kind sollicitude, to those

Who never knew what soft sensations were ;

But, charm'd with the loud rattling of the dice,

Devoted ev'ry night to play. Alas !

'Twas not the play of mirthful innocence,

That cheerfully beguiles a tedious hour ;

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But urg'd by an unlawful wish of gain,
False dice, and other shameful practices
Were us'd, the heedless victim to ensnare.
They never quaff'd the cheerful healthy glass;
But, by the frequent potent draught misled,
Yielded the bark of reason to the care
Of that unsteady pilot inclination,
Who cannot steer betwixt the fatal rocks
Of dissipation and extravagance,
Unless by prudence guided at the helm.

On a sad night, when all were loud with mirth,
And wine had elevated ev'ry heart;
When the rude song was chorus'd by them all;
And as they sat carousing, void of care;
The father of the wretched boy appear'd.
He had been told his dear son's fav'rite haunt,
And kindly went, hoping he might reclaim
An only child, so tenderly belov'd.
Soon as he enter'd, ah! how vast the shock!
Albert arose, and, in a furious rage,
Bade him begone, and trouble him no more:
When thus the father spake: "My dearest boy,
"Chide not an anxious parent, who for you
"Has left the social converse of his friends,
"To seek thee, where, alas! I little thought
"A son of mine I e'er should have to find:
"Thy interest is next a father's heart;

“ It racks me to believe thy words arise
“ From native feelings. To the pow’r of wine
“ I would impute this sad unnat’ral change.
“ Return with me, my son, while yet I can;
“ For sure thy form so alter’d, once so fair,
“ Would strike that terror to my troubled breast,
“ If I should longer stay, I could no more
“ Sustain the wretched load my life would be.
“ Once more return, my son, and in my arms
“ Forget thy gay, thy dissipated train
“ Of vile associates; and let them see
“ Thy good example, and like thee reform.”
Then gently, with affectionate regard,
Taking his arm, he thought to lead him home:
But, oh! the rebel son, with dreadful oaths,
Broke from his hold, and dealt a cruel blow
At him who gave him being. On his breast
The blow descended, and he left the room
With scarce sufficient strength to crawl along:
Yet, as he shut the door, he faintly cry’d,
“ Can wine thus null fair nature’s dearest ties?
“ Can it create the son a parricide?
“ Ah! pois’nous stream! — A son! — Unnat’ral
“ boy!
“ Boast not thy triumph, soon will it be o’er:—
“ That blow has broke my heart:—O God for
“ give thee!”

Albert next morn, at the accustom'd hour,
Return'd, and found an unexpected scene ;
A scene of mourning, horror, grief unfeign'd.
His father lay extended on his couch,
With few apparent signs of life : he saw
The son to whom he ow'd his inward wound,
(For outward wounds are as the slightest scratch,
Compar'd to those which rack the inward mind ;)
And cast an eye of pity, and of pardon,
Where was expected anger and revenge :
For Albert now remember'd well the scene
His dying father had been witness to ;
And now the tear of true repentance shone
Near bursting from his eye, where deepest grief
And sad despair were plainly visible.
A sigh he heav'd ; and down his pallid cheek,
In quick succession, follow'd tears of woe,
Or, let me say, of penitence : but, ah !
They came (as penitence oft comes) too late ;
When thus the dying man :

“ My son, draw near.

“ I trust the tear which bursts from Albert's eye,
“ Flows from unfeign'd contrition's purest spring ;
“ It does, my son ; I will believe it does ;
“ And, O ! how happy will thy father die,
“ Confirm'd in the belief, that by his death
“ He sav'd a son from ruin ! I shall go

- “ To gain a place for thee in realms of bliss,
“ Which heav'n grant you justly may inherit.
“ Therefore, my boy, think not on what has past;
“ Look to the way before you. Quick reform.
“ Leave the detested crew of idle youths
“ Who would engage you in their mad career ;
“ And let thy thoughts on heavenly mercy bend.”
“ Mercy for me !” he cry'd ; “ Mercy for me !
“ A murderer ! a vile unnat'ral parricide !
“ Or if there reign a just and mighty Power,
“ To punish evil, and reward the good,
“ Quick let me meet the welcome hand of fate,
“ And expiate (if possible) the sin
“ Of shedding an indulgent parent's blood.
“ O wine ! O fatal liquor ! never more
“ Thy soft persuasive poison shall approach
“ These lips ; no more shall smiles adorn the cheek
“ Of him who murders ; conscience must alone
“ Be his sad guest ; and conscience then be mine.
“ Yet, O, my father ! if my cursed arm
“ Has been the fatal instrument of death,
“ Albert shall follow to the welcome grave.”
“ No more, my son ; such language ill becomes
“ Poor helpless man, who lives not to himself.
“ We are God's work ; let him who gave us
“ breath,
“ When it shall please him, call us from the
“ world.”

He fainted; and all flew to his relief.

Albert, among the rest, in silent woe,

Attended on his parent; but in vain.

He op'd his eyes, and call'd his still lov'd son,

Mildly forgave him, blest him, and expir'd.

Albert, in wild despair, now smote his breast,

Now kiss'd his father's lips, and frantic wept.

All utterance to his words his grief denied.

At last, in furious phrenzy, thus he rav'd :

“ And can I bear to live ? a parricide !

“ A murd'rer of my dearest friend on earth !

“ Where is the haunt of villains ? There I'll lurk,

“ And, as the cheerful traveller draws near,

“ Whistling, and gay, unmindful of the snare,

“ Seize him, and strip him of the honest spoils,

“ He gained by industry unceasing.—Ha !

“ Is this a crime for Albert's family ?

“ Honor and rectitude mark'd all the ways,

“ Each motion of my father ; and shall I

“ Thus stray from Virtue's path ? Shall Albert's son,

“ Thus live ? But, ah ! no longer Albert's son,

“ No longer lov'd, no longer worthy love :

“ A murd'rer ! a parricide ! a villain !”

Thus did he rave ; but when the passion cool'd

That fiercely rent his agitated breast,

Despair and agonizing grief gave way

To melancholy inexpressible :

Words seem'd a task his lips with pain perform'd ;

And oft the day throughout alone he sat
In gloomy meditation, and refus'd
To join his mother at the general meal.
One morn, his mother, soon as she arofe,
Upon her toilet found, in hasty scrawl,
These lines: "The wretched Albert is no more:
"He hastes to pay th' inevitable debt
"A murder'd father's spirit loud demands."
The mother's grief the muse shall not essay
To paint; imagination can conceive
Much easier by far than words express:
But let us follow Albert, and from him
Learn how to conquer passions beating high,
And how to curb the impulse of despair,
Which bids us rush to meet the hand of fate,
And cancel crimes which nature starts to hear,
By mad rebellion 'gainst her dearest laws.
When unperceiv'd he had securely plac'd
The lines which told his fatal resolution,
To the sweet spot where he had ever liv'd,
And ever still found pleasure in the scene,
Tho' never varied, he a last adieu
With some reluctance gave. For nature still
(Gainst every passion that pervades the heart)
With all a mother's fondness will prevail.



PART II.

Th' unbusied shepherd, stretch'd beneath the hawthorn,
 His careless limbs thrown out in wanton ease,
 With thoughtless gaze perusing the arch'd heav'ns,
 And idly whistling while his sheep feed round him,
 Enjoys a sweeter shade than that of canopies
 Hem'd in by cares, and shook by storms of treason.

Hail.

Then turn to night, and freely share
 Whate'er my cell bestows;
 My rushy couch, and frugal fare,
 My blessing and repose.

• • • • •
 But nothing could a charm impart
 To sooth the stranger's woe;
 For grief was heavy at his heart,
 And tears began to flow.

Goldsmith.

WHEN once the village vanish'd from his sight,
 As on he journey'd, for he oft look'd back,
 To aid imagination in the thought
 Of pleasures past, his boyish years had known;
 With eager pace he halted from the spot,
 And stopt but seldom to recruit his strength,
 Impair'd by constant walking; even then
 But for a time sufficient to partake
 The poor repast his wallet did afford.
 By perseverance in the toilsome task,

He at the wood, which, near the rural seat
Of Mountague, seems eager to invite
The friend to solitude, at last arriv'd.

His father's dying words ne'er left his ear.

His rash determination—suicide,

He chang'd to one as opposite, as good ;

And thus he spake in deep soliloquy.

“ Shall I, who now have sinn'd, (alas ! how great

“ Does the enormous crime appear !) shall I

“ Increase that sin, by breaking the command

“ Of him of whom I would implore forgiveness ?

“ Vast is my crime ; but to repent sincere

“ Is all I now can do, and that may gain

“ Pardon at last from him who fees my heart,

“ And knows the poignant anguish I endure.

“ And shall I, by a doubly horrid act,

“ Forfeit all claim to mercy ? Stained with guilt,

“ I feel guilt's just reward, and must submit.

“ The Power that punishes can also pardon,

“ When with contrition sinful mortals sue.

“ The thought of suicide be banish'd hence

“ For ever from my breast. Here in some cell,

“ By nature hewn, I'll spend my latter days ;

“ And in retirement find sufficient time

“ To make a due repentance all my care.”

* * * * *

There stood for many years a cottage near,

The only one within the forest's bounds ;

The humble, yet contented residence
Of one whose flock was all his earthly wealth.
He rose each morn with cheerful song, or blythe
Would whistle as he drove his tender care
Forth to the verdant pasture ; there, with eye
Uplifted to the heavens, would he bless
The Author of that happiness he knew.
His wife would often undertake the charge,
While he return'd to cultivate the spot
Of field, or garden, he might call his own ;
And thus they seem'd to live amidst delight ;
Uninterrupted, loving and belov'd.
Albert in him soon found a social friend ;
And the good dame would love to hear him talk,
So did his pious conversation aid
Their thoughts, which yet they knew not to express.
But thoughts are known to Him who dwells above,
And pious thoughts are not without reward.
Each day he visited his rural friends,
And as they cheerful drew the home-brew'd ale,
Which temperance would circulate to each,
They beg'd him to accept a welcome bed
Beneath their humble roof ; and to partake
With them the daily food their labour earn'd.
But, no ! he lov'd his mossy cave too well ;
And thought him bound by promises to heaven,
To taste no pleasure but what nature gave
For fourteen tedious years.



He now had past
Eleven in the friendship of the pair,
Which, join'd to three of solitude and grief,
Declar'd the æra of repentance clos'd ;
When, as he sat in silent reverence,
Adoring nature's beauteous works, display'd
Around his rough-hewn cell, with wringing hands
Approach'd his friend, the worthy cottager.
" O haste, and comfort my beloved wife,"
(In faint and broken accents he exclaim'd,)
" Who now upon the bed of sickness lies,
" Alas ! I fear to rise again no more.
" A sudden chillness seiz'd her, and she fears
" Death hovers o'er her chamber. Thanks to God,
" If now she dies, she dies not unprepar'd ;
" Thy kind and pious conversation taught,
" When conscience in an aged bosom sits,
" Pure, and unshaken by the blast of guilt,
" If death approach, he comes a welcome guest."

Eager he rose, and to the hut apace
They ran, each kindly anxious to be first.
Albert drew near the bed. He took her hand,
And pray'd and comforted her oft by turns.
Exhausted nature would but just permit
Her eyelids once to open. With a look
Of gratitude, which he with joy observ'd,

They clos'd again ; 'twas then they clos'd for ever.
Albert in vain endeavour'd to console
The cottager, whose wild distemper'd brain
Taught him to rave, and heed not consolation :
But when his grief abated, then he mark'd
The time to teach him, " Mortals must obey."
He took his hand, and tenderly he spoke.
" My friend, lament no more ; 'tis all in vain
" To rail at Providence when woe arrives.
" Your wife and you together happy liv'd
" Almost twice fifteen years : you lov'd her much,
" And wish'd her ev'ry pleasure life could give.
" She now enjoys a more than mortal bliss,
" Amongst those realms where none but angels
 dwell,
" And give the just reward for godly lives,
" Spent in this busy world below.
 " My friend,
" Forbear to mourn ; and resignation learn
" To heav'n's decree ; for, O ! we all must know,
" What Providence ordains, *man must obey*."
With pious consolation, thus he sooth'd
The poor dejected man, who urg'd his stay
That night, that he next morning might renew
His salutary precepts. He agreed ;
But when the next night came, his honest host
Still pray'd him to continue, and supply
The place of his departed mate ; to live

In the same cottage, and partake with him
 The daily scanty, yet contented, meal,
 Bestow'd by the all-bounteous hand of heaven,
 To recompence unwearied industry.
 The time expir'd for his repentant life,
 The offer he did not again refuse ;
 But thank'd his host ; and on the table plac'd
 A purse, which to his garment had been tied
 E'er since he wander'd from his native home ;
 From which he would relieve the needy poor,
 If any past the unfrequented road.
 " Take this," said he, " and be it still your care
 " To purchase, at the neighb'ring village, all
 " That life requires, and which now we lack.
 " Let not a lux'ry deck our humble board,
 " But live as usual ; for what pleases you
 " Albert must love. I ask no greater joy
 " Than to see you, my hospitable host,
 " Happy and cheerful each succeeding day."
 With gratitude half bursting from his eye,
 The cottager then seiz'd his willing hand,
 And kiss'd it thrice :—" You are, indeed, a friend !"
 He could no more, for tears had vanquish'd speech ;
 His tongue refus'd the dictates of his heart.

* * * * *

Ten years felicity these friends had seen,
 When, as they sat one night in social chat,
 A loud and frequent knocking shook the door,

Alarm'd they rose ; and one for pity cried
In plaintive tone, and shelter from the storm,
Which seem'd to threaten universal deluge.

“ Enter,” said Albert, as he op'd the door :

“ Enter, whoe'er thou art, and here reside

“ Till morning's sun illumine the dreary wood.”

A woman, with a lovely infant boy,
Whose tender age four years could not exceed,
Stood the poor suff'ring victim of the storm ;
And, as she enter'd at the friendly door,
She sunk exhausted into Albert's chair.

“ Pardon this seeming rudeness. O, forgive !

“ But when you hear my tale, ah ! sure I am,

“ You'll pity me, and think not of offence.”

Thus she began, but speech was soon denied ;
Her lips, for want of their accusom'd food,
Refus'd their wonted duty. Albert saw,
And brought refreshment, which, tho' homely
fare,

Was thankfully receiv'd, and deem'd delicious.

And now to tell her melancholy tale

They earnestly requested. With a sigh,

That plainly shew'd all was not calm within,

She thus began, as they attentive sat ;

While tender sympathy, at sorrow's tale,

Partook her woe, and gave her tear for tear.

“ My tale is tedious, were I to relate

“ Each past occurrence, fresh to memory,

“ From happy infancy to riper years ;
“ But as your goodness binds me to comply,
“ In brief I will unfold the cruel cause
“ Which now expos'd me, and my darling child,
“ To the wild fury of the raging storm.
“ Left at sixteen to the indulgent care
“ Of a dear father, who with fondest love
“ Supply'd a tender mother's anxious place ;
“ Seymour, a youth too comely to withstand,
“ And whose persuasive tongue had made my heart
“ (My inexperience'd heart) an easy conquest,
“ Besought me of that father for his bride :
“ But, ah ! an enmity of long account
“ Between our parents, was the wretched cause
“ Of a refusal, which in bitter terms
“ My father gave, and swore I should not wed
“ The only son of his detested foe.
“ He strictly charg'd me never more to speak
“ To one whom he refus'd : he charg'd in vain :
“ For all alone, on one fine summer's eve,
“ As thro' the wood behind the house I stray'd,
“ I met my Seymour : there, respectful love
“ Subdu'd obedience ; and the cruel charge
“ My anger'd parent gave was cast aside.
“ He made me promise (how I've mourn'd the
“ day !)
“ To fly from a beloved father's arms,
“ And shelter seek in his.

“ That very night

“ (When sleep had clos'd a father's watchful eyes)

“ I crept along the garden, and escap'd

“ To that lov'd youth; and bade a last adieu

“ To guardianship parental, and, alas!

“ A last adieu to fond parental love.

“ To Scotland's realm, where Seymour had a
“ friend,

“ We bent our course with unremitting speed,

“ Fearing the quick pursuit of him whose pow'r

“ I had but too much cause, alas! to dread:

“ We there were married to our mutual joy.

“ Four years, amidst uninterrupted bliss,

“ (Save the reproach of conscience at an act

“ I shudder'd to reflect on; but how soon

“ Did Seymour's soothing smiles dispel remorse!

“ Soon past away, and with them two sweet babes,

“ Leaving but one (my Reginald) behind:

“ But, ah! four years of bliss, how much I fear,

“ Are to be follow'd by four years of woe!

“ 'Twas scarce two months ago, when, as we sat

“ As usual by our happy cottage fire,

“ My Seymour seiz'd my hand. “ My dearest
“ love!”

He frantic cried, “ My sweet Louisa! oh!

“ How shall I shock thy fond, thy tender heart!

“ And yet I must. God grant thee fortitude

“ To bear the woes of which I've been the cause!

“ I have not one poor solitary piece:
“ To-morrow’s dawn will see me stretch’d at
“ length
“ (Unless my heart-strings break to think of thee,
“ And my dear boy, both left to poverty)
“ On the bare ground, in some damp loathsome
“ cell,
“ Where debtors pine in wretched misery.”
“ Too true he spake. Scarce had the early lark
“ Proclaim’d the day, when, as he lonely walk’d,
“ As was his custom, in the neighbouring field,
“ I saw him from the casement forc’d away
“ By two who seem’d like men, but that their hearts
“ Were proof against the supplicating tear
“ Shed for a wife and infant; for he told
“ All his distress, and knelt, and sigh’d, and
“ pray’d,
“ For pity of the monsters; but in vain.
“ He ne’er return’d: I never saw him more.
“ My landlord sternly bade me quit the house,
“ And said a week was all he could allow.
“ The seventh day arriv’d; on that sad morn
“ A letter from my Seymour I receiv’d.
“ He said he felt he had not long to live:
“ Grief, for the many sorrows he had caus’d,
“ Prey’d on his heart, which could no longer bear
“ The load of mis’ry under which he groan’d.
“ He blest me thrice, and bad me quickly haste

“ With the dear pledge of our united love
“ To England, to our parents : for he said,
“ The smile of innocence would conquer rage,
“ And cause a softer passion in the breast.
“ The prospect of forgiveness cheer’d my heart,
“ And made me undertake the toilsome task.
“ But, no : my father saw me as he sat,
“ And sent a servant, who, with manners rude,
“ Deny’d my entrance ; for my father swore
“ He never more would own me for his child.
“ My Seymour’s father with compassion heard
“ My tale ; but said his son must ne’er expect
“ Assistance from that home from whence he fled.
“ He gave me then his purse, and sighing, said,
“ I cannot bring myself to see you more.
“ I pity you ; my son I pity not.
“ He lov’d not me with love like mine for him,
“ Else had he never found this cruel way
“ To break a father’s heart.” I left him then,
“ And knew not where to wander, faint and weak,
“ Fatigu’d with constant walking : for on foot
“ I came most part the journey with my boy.
“ An inn was nigh : but, ah ! I could not spare
“ A shilling from the purse. I was resolv’d
“ To ope it not till Seymour could partake
“ Its generous contents, as from the hands
“ Of *his* and not *my* father it was given,
“ In pity to my woe. I had enough

“ To bear my small expences on the road,
“ If weariness had left me. Slowly on
“ I stray’d, until this forest I drew near;
“ And here I thought secure to pass the night;
“ But that tremendous storm arising, soon
“ Forc’d me for shelter to your friendly roof;
“ That shelter you so gen’rously afford.”
“ And heav’n forbid that I should e’er refuse,”
“ Said Albert, “ what the traveller implores.
“ Here rest till morn, or longer, if it suit;
“ And let sweet sleep refresh you. Yonder room
“ Shall sacred be till you depart our cot.”
At dawn of day Louisa quick arose,
And Albert thus propos’d a welcome scheme.
“ You see me here, fair lady, with my friend;
“ Here have we been for many happy years;
“ And here may heaven grant us still to live,
“ Till your return from Scotland’s coast again.
“ For I would strongly urge your swiftest speed
“ To purchase his release; and when he hastes
“ To rush into a still lov’d parent’s arms,
“ And bathe his bosom with repentant tears,
“ That parent sure will pardon. If this sum
“ (A trifling sum to us, who need not here
“ The lux’ries of the great) can be of use
“ Towards obtaining freedom once again
“ For one you love so dearly, let me hope
“ That, though sequester’d from the busy world,

- “ I am not yet so miserably curs'd,
“ To be denied the sweet felicity,
“ To aid a fellow-creature in distress.
“ Hear me yet more : your son shall stay with me ;
“ He will amuse me with his playful-talk,
“ When sorrow reigns with more than usual sway.
“ I will instruct him with my ablest power,
“ And love him as myself. I'll teach him all
“ Experience taught me. He will but be
“ A burthen in your journey, and impede
“ Your speedy progress to your Seymour's arms.
“ Go, and may heaven prosper your design !
“ And may I see you happily return,
“ With smiles of ecstacy to see once more
“ The darling pledge of unabated love.”

She could not speak ; for tears of gratitude
Delay'd the impulse of her swelling heart :
She prest his hand ; and clasp'd her infant son :
She kiss'd him oft, but could not say adieu ;
And seiz'd a moment, when he left the room,
To hurry from the hospitable cot.
Twelve years elaps'd ; they neither heard nor saw
The youthful Seymour's mother : he, poor boy,
Would oft lament she stay'd so long away :
And yet he lov'd old Albert and his friend,
And would delight in their instructive talk,
By which his mind was form'd of goodness pure.
Each day would Albert teach him something new,

Some pious precept, or some moral duty :
And in such winning methods he'd attract
The youth's attention, reverence and love
Knew not precedence ; equal was the tie.
'Twas then the cottager obey'd the call
Of unrelenting death, but died with ease,
And yielded up with joy his parting breath
In the lov'd bosom of his dearest friend.
His pupil now became his only care ;
And, next to heav'n, on him were bent his
thoughts :

He taught him virtue's sacred path to gain ;
He taught him all the snares of vice to shun.
'Twas at this period young Constantio saw,
And first conceiv'd a generous esteem
For one so worthy of his fondest love ;
Which glow'd reciprocally in each breast,
With ardor unabated from that day.



PART III.

Friendship ! thou soft propitious power !

Sweet regent of the social hour !

Sublime thy joys, nor understood,

But by the virtuous and the good !

Cabal and riot take thy name,

But 'tis a false affected claim :

In heav'n if love and friendship dwell,

Can they associate e'er with hell ?

Cotton.

His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles,

His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate ;

His tears, pure messengers, sent from his heart ;

His heart as far from fraud as heav'n from earth.

Shakespeare.

CONSTANTIO lov'd young Seymour as himself,

And in his well-tried faithful bosom plac'd

Such ample confidence, as plainly shew'd

He thought him worthy of the sacred trust.

Seymour as tenderly return'd his love,

And likewise sought in Mountague to find

(And Theodore, the brother of his friend)

A heart as open, generous and kind.

For long had his admiring eye beheld

The beauteous tint of fair Maria's cheek ;

Long had he mark'd each virtue as it rose,
And wonder'd much to see in one combin'd
So many and such noble qualities.
Affection, filial duty, led the way ;
Fraternal love the next in rank appear'd ;
A num'rous train were plainly seen behind,
Which could not 'scape his penetrating eye.
Respectful friendship to a beauteous maid
Soon changes to a softer name—to love.
But, ah ! a cruel cause delay'd his blifs,
And many doubts his anxious breast o'erwhelm'd,
E'er he attain'd the summit of his hopes.

Not far from noble Mountague's retreat
Dwelt Clarefon, Raymond, and their neighbour
Moore ;
Men of the *ton*, the sons of wealthy squires,
Who, while their parents join'd the frequent chace,
Oft met to while away an hour at play.
For want of that best tutor of the mind,
A father's tender counsel, they became
So wrapt in their beloved dangerous joy,
That now their parents found it vain to speak,
Or urge their inability to pay
The debts which *Honor* frequently demands.
Pity a name so sacred should be us'd
A mask to fraud—nay, oft to villainy !

When Theodore appear'd, the eldest son
Of one whose rank and title seem'd to boast
A spacious mine of inexhausting wealth,
When once they heard that constantly to live
At this his feat was now his only wish,
(For publicly was his intention known,)
'Twas then, O then, they form'd the vilest plan
That e'er deluded youthful innocence !
For well they knew 'twas easy to persuade
An inexperience'd youth to Pleasure's path,
By whatsoever means the path is gain'd.
They thought his income must of course be great,
And strait resolv'd to tempt him to accept
A place in (what they call'd) their joint regard ;
That the unwary victim might be near,
And fall to their designs an easy prey.
To Mountague they soon got introduc'd,
As men most worthy of his son's esteem ;
(For each most strongly recommended each ;)
And Mountague was now rejoic'd to think
His son's connections were with worthy men.
So were they all by Theodore approv'd ;
And mutual good opinion seem'd to reign.
E'er they took leave, a friendly wish prevail'd,
They all should meet on the succeeding day
At Clare'son's villa, and cement the tie
Of that firm friendship promis'd by them all.

The good old Lord denied not the request ;
And at the hour they previously agreed,
Went Theodore to greet his new-made friends.
Unfeigned cordiality, and love,
Appear'd to him throughout the place to reign :
The joke and song succeeding, past the time
In innocent, tho' gay, hilarity ;
When Clarefon, as the ev'ning quick approach'd,
Arose, and call'd for cards. " Excuse me there,"
Said Theodore : " indeed, I never play."
" What, never !" said young Raymond with sur-
prize.
" Why, as for never," Theodore replied—
" At home, indeed, to take a hand at cards,
" To please my friends, or make a fourth at whist ;
" I do not call that being fond of play."
" Pshaw ! pshaw !" said Moore, " if e'er you
touch'd a card,
" You must have felt the magic they impart ;
" If e'er you play'd, you must adore the game :
" Cards have a winning power one can't with-
stand."
" Pardon me once again," said Theodore ;
" Cards have a *losing* power one can't withstand."
" Well said, my boy," said Clarefon ; " your reply
" Displays a ready wit I love to hear.
" But, come ; we trifle time ; we've still an hour

"To pass away in innocent employ,
"And what so fit, so innocent as cards?"
"Come, come, one rubber; shillings is the game;
"We ne'er play higher;" Raymond then rejoined.
"I care not," answered Theodore, "if so;
"One rubber freely I'll consent to play,
"Provided, when 'tis finish'd, we depart."

Partners were drawn for, and the deal went round.

"And now the bets," said Moore, and laid a
crown

Upon the table; "who will take me this?"

"Come, Raymond: What the deuce, what, not a
"crown!"

"Come, Mountague: perhaps you never *bet*."

"Indeed," he answered, "you conjecture right;

"I never do; and more, I never will."

"Nay, nay," said Moore, "I would not give
offence:

"Tho' early, yet I hope our friendship firm;

"And heaven forbid that I should be the first

"To mar the tie that gives us all such joy:

"We hold your friendship, trust me, far too dear,

"To risk its loss on such a slight pretence."

Behold him now as eager as the rest,

Remark the game with scientific tongue;

For when he played, he kept one constant rule,

To play his best, whatever was the stake.

They wonder'd at his knowledge ; winks went round,

And other silent marks of gamesters' joy.

The game now over, ev'ry one arose,

Unwilling at the first that he should see

Their usual mode of life, as much they fear'd

The sudden prospect might create disgust ;

So thought it wiser by degrees to draw

Their victim to the overwhelming snare.

So have I seen the victim of the hook

Humor'd and tickled, till the treach'rous bait

Guides to the rosy gill ; and when too late,

It plies its silver oar, and dives beneath,

Dragg'd at the pleasure of the angling boy.

His friends with many a smile, and cordial shake,

With many oaths of strictest amity,

Regretted his departure. He return'd

As many protestations of regard ;

And left them (as they saw) reluctantly.

As passing near the grove he homeward went,

Albert observ'd him, and with hasten'd speed

Just overtook him e'er he reach'd the house,

And kindly ask'd his welcome at his friends.

" O," exclaim'd Theodore, " I can't describe

" The many and polite attentions paid.

" When that the wine had thrice gone briskly

" round,

"That time might not hang heavy, cards were
"brought,

"And cheerfully we play'd away an hour :

"Shillings the game; and those who chose to
"bet,

"Were limited to risk a crown, no more."

"Did you say bet, my Theodore?" exclaim'd
Th' astonish'd Albert. "Did my boy say bet ?

"On first acquaintance ? 'tis, indeed, too bad !

"My dearest child, experience bids me speak :

"(Think that near eighty winters I have seen,

"And thou art yet within thy twentieth year :)

"High heaven can witness 'tis thy int'rest calls

"On my best power, to warn you and advise.

"Shun, I beseech you, these deceitful friends ;

"They spread a snare for thy unwary feet

"Which inexperience never can avoid,

"Unless by prudence guided in the path.

"O never more approach them !"

"Hence, old man !"

Said Theodore, with anger much inflam'd :

"Keep thy suspicions till they're ask'd for, Sir ;

"And give advice to those who want a guide.

"If, as you say, experience bids you speak,

"Let duty bid you quickly hold your tongue."

"Yet hear me," answered then the good old man :

"I would not give offence : the love, esteem,

“ And reverence I bear thy father’s name,
“ Urge me to wish to save his son from ruin.”
“ Poor foolish man! waste not thy vacant words,
“ Nor think to fright me with thy idle fear:
“ No, envious as thou art, all thou can’st say,
“ Ne’er can reflect dishonour on my friends.
“ Tell me of snares, and lures; by men like those!
“ By heaven! I know no character so base
“ As the vile slanderer of another’s fame!”
“ Nor I,” said Albert. “ God forbid that I
“ Be guilty of a crime I so detest!
“ But fond esteem for thee, and all thy house,
“ Bid me attempt (I thought) an easy task.
“ O, let reflection teach you to observe
“ How great, how vast, the impropriety.
“ Hear me with patience: all that age can do
“ Is to advise; ’tis youth’s to take, or spurn.
“ When next you meet, for that I plainly see
“ My caution will not (would it might) prevent,
“ Observe each look, expression, ev’ry word;
“ Observe their eagerness; each trifling nod,
“ Or wink, has in it some unfair design.
“ If you must go, if you will meet again,
“ Forget not these my cautions.” Here the tears
Trickled adown the old man’s furrow’d cheeks!
Remembrance of a scene in early life
Had check’d his speech. He wip’d them to proceed.

- “ Youth is too fond of Pleasure to observe
“ The various masks she sports in to allure ;
“ They eagerly pursue her wanton steps,
“ Without a thought where she at last may lead :
“ Then cometh Prudence ; kindly she intrudes,
“ And offers her invaluable aid :
“ She offers, but she cannot force advice ;
“ And if the victim is too far advanc'd
“ In Pleasure's toils to listen to her voice,
“ She drops a pitying tear, and leaves him, prey
“ To that fell enemy he so pursu'd ;
“ Who still invites ; and when the eager youth
“ (Still following the ever glitt'ring bait)
“ Has past the bounds of honor, then unmasks ;
“ Shews her true form ; throws off the treach'rous
“ veil ;
“ And sinks her hapless victim into ruin.
“ Weigh what I've said, examine well the cause,
“ And judge if I have ought so near my heart,
“ As thine, or my dear Seymour's happiness.”
He ceas'd, and with a gentle bow past on.
“ And shall this man,” said Theodore, “ presume,
“ Because my father condescends to join
“ His doating prattle, shall he dare defame
“ The characters of men of worth like these ?
“ But, no !—I see, I see his envious heart :
“ This Seymour 'tis : this fond, this fav'rite boy,

“ Envy my favor in the eye of men
“ The wealthiest in the neighbourhood: I see,
“ But I despise their fruitless, mean endeavours.
“ Seymour, beware; else *thou* wilt raise my hate:
“ Keep *thy* dull counsels to thyself, nor dare
“ Attempt with envy to disturb my joy.”

He met Constantio at the mansion gate,
Who came to meet him with that honest smile,
For ever beaming on his manly cheek:
He first affectionately graspt his hand,
And then in mildest accents he began:

“ To you, dear Theodore, I now entrust
“ A secret, known as yet to me alone.
“ Our common friend, our Seymour, yesterday
“ (As walking arm in arm along the grove,
“ We talk’d aloud in mutual confidence)
“ Confest our dear Maria’s artless charms
“ Had gain’d his honest, his untainted heart.
“ He sigh’d despair, yet still seem’d pleas’d to talk
“ On that soft theme his bosom only knew.
“ He bade me guard the secret but from you.
“ He knew the vast wide difference between
“ His orphan state, and her exalted birth;
“ But still, said he, you know my only hope:
“ A mother, still, perhaps, may seek her son:
“ Tho’ long she’s left me, she may yet return.
“ But, O! I rave: despair will turn my brain.

"Lost, when I view thy sister's beauteous form,

"I proudly think to seize the destin'd prize;

"Reflect, and mourn an humble orphan's lot."

"That favors of good sense," said Theodore;

"Or trust me I should think the youth were craz'd,

"To dare aspire to gain our sister's hand."

"It is not surely Theodore that speaks,"

Replied the good Constantio: "surely he

"Cannot remember 'tis our worthy friend

"At humble distance sues. O, had you heard

"His falt'ring tongue tell his respectful tale,

"You would have wish'd his rank had equall'd

"ours,

"Or that our humble lot compar'd with his."

"For shame! Constantio: prithee urge no more:

"Sure 'tis unkind to rate our sister's worth

"So low, as e'en to think upon the name.

"Seymour† the very infants, as they pass,

"Know and accost (contempt in every word)

"The orphan Seymour. Does he dare pretend

"To enter Mountague's unblemish'd list?"

"Alas!" return'd Constantio, "I confess

"His inability to rank with us

"In title or in fortune, yet I own

"I think in one great quality he comes

"In equal brilliancy to her he woos.

"His heart, my Theodore, unfullied, pure

“ As that which in Maria’s bosom dwells,
“ Deserves to meet its equal ; merits all
“ That sympathy, sweet soother ! can bestow.”
“ And pray now,” sneering, Theodore return’d,
“ When first you heard his melancholy tale,
“ What gentle answer might your pitying heart
“ Prompt you to make ? Methinks I long to hear.”
“ Most willingly you shall,” Constantio said.
“ I heard his tale with patience, as became
“ A friend, whose friendship not alone consists
“ In words and empty promises. I heard
“ And mark’d the combat in his noble breast,
“ And when the pleasing secret he had told,
“ Regretted much my inability
“ At once to crown my Seymour’s utmost hope.”
“ And could you so forget our sister’s worth ?”
Replied his brother with contemptuous smile,
“ To wish her wedded to so mean a mate ?
“ Could partial favour for the orphan boy
“ Thy sister’s merits artfully obscure ?
“ How blind art thou, Constantio, to permit
“ Such subtle cunning to obtain belief !
“ Self-interest sways his breast : I know him now :
“ I once accounted him of noble mind,
“ Of gen’rous principle, unsullied truth ;
“ But I have found, and haply not too late,
“ The bosom that reviv’d the drooping snake

Is destin'd (if a timely caution fail)
To feel that sting which thence deriv'd its power."
Constantio trembled at th' unjust idea,
And answer'd thus with mildest energy.

"O, Theodore! my brother! tell me who
Has slander'd thus my lov'd, my faithful friend?
"He has been slander'd, for I know his heart
"Pure from the fullied current of deceit:
"Unblemish'd is his nobleness of soul,
"As drifted snow appears in spotless white.
"Hear him when he began his timid tale,
"His words I will endeavour to recite:
"His gentle manner I will not essay
"(For vain would be th' attempt) to imitate.
"His words and actions, govern'd by respect,
"In vain would oft endeavour to conceal
"Love's ardent fire, that glisten'd in his eye."

"From thee, my friend, whose confidential love
"Unlimited I have so long enjoyed,
" 'Twould be most base ingratitude to hide
"A secret that so near concerns thy peace;
"A hopeless secret, yet it must be told;
"For as the mariner delights to tell
"The perils he has shar'd, tho' ev'ry word
"Should bring past terrors back to memory,
"So is the bosom eas'd that vents its woe

“ In presence of a sympathetic friend :
“ So is the bosom eas’d where love resides,
“ When friendship heaves one sympathetic sigh.
“ I love thy beauteous sister.

“ Can I dare

“ Proceed unanswer’d by a killing frown ?
“ Say, did you hear the orphan boldly own
“ He lov’d such bright exalted excellence,
“ And does the smile still play around thy brow ?
“ Constantio ! O, my friend ! I’m unprepar’d
“ For generosity unparallel’d !
“ The soaring lark, tho’ high advanc’d in air,
“ Is still far distant from the azure sky ;
“ Yet does not proud ambition prompt the lay,
“ But, warbling praises from her tuneful throat,
“ Adores afar, and keeps within her sphere.
“ So will I view thy sister ; so regard
“ The fatal distance ’twixt my bliss and me.
“ Yet, tho’ I dare not hope felicity,
“ Still must I gaze ; and gazing, still adore.”
“ ’Twas here he stopt : How could I then reply,
(Constantio still continued,) “ but to calm
“ Contending powers that rack’d his feeling breast ?
“ Alas ! could I forbid him to repeat
“ What in repeating only gave delight ?
“ Could I deny that pity to his grief
“ His faithful bosom would have shed for me ?

“ No ! tho’ I did not dare to bid him hope,
“ (My father and yourself yet unadvis’d,)
“ I did not, could not, tell him to despair.”
“ That task remains for me,” said Theodore ;
“ A welcome task, and shall with speed be done.
“ Hear me, and mark ; if Seymour dare presume
“ To beg my favor to his lofty suit,
“ At once I drive away each friendly thought ;
“ And hatred may—Enough—Proud youth ! be-
“ ware.”

He ceas’d, and with a swift unsteady pace
Hasten’d towards the door. Constantio sigh’d,
And following, entreated him to check
The settled frown that sorrow might create
In an indulgent father’s anxious breast.
The plea prevail’d : he smooth’d his angry brow ;
But soon retir’d (alas ! in vain) to sleep.



PART IV.

What tho' no gaudy titles grace my birth;
 Titles, the servile courtier's lean reward!
 Sometimes the pay of virtue, but more oft
 The hire which greatness gives to slaves and fycophants;
 Yet heaven, that made me honest, made me more
 Than e'er a king did when he made a lord.

Rowe.

He says, he loves my daughter;
 I think so too; for never gaz'd the moon
 Upon the water, as he'll stand and read,
 As 'twere, my daughter's eyes: and, to be plain,
 I think, there is not half a kifs to choose
 Who-loves another most.

Shakespeare.

THE night was tedious to the troubled mind
 Of restless Theodore: he ne'er before
 Had known the want of sleep's refreshing pow'r;
 And had not known it now, if discontent
 (Imagination-form'd) had ne'er combin'd
 With anger to disturb that native glow
 Of mild serenity he once possess'd.
 Reflection could not aid him: still he saw,
 Or thought he saw, in Albert's kind advice,
 A subtle mask o'er bold usurping pow'r;
 And well he knew his father's firm regard,

Alike for him, and for the orphan youth.
Constantio too appear'd to cast aside
A brother's love, in pleading for his friend;
(So soon suspicion magnifies our woes!)

"'Tis well!" he cried, "I still have three friends,
"left;

"With them I hope to spend far happier hours
"Than seem to wait me here:—they are true
"friends;

"They wish but for occasion to oblige;
"And in their smiles I view their noble hearts,"

Thus meditating he began his walk,
When, at the entrance of the hated grove,
He met the innocent more-hated youth.
Seymour approach'd, as usual, with respect;
But with a confidence by friendship taught.
He saw the frown quick gathering on his brow,
But little thought himself could be the cause.
He seiz'd his hand, and, smiling in his face,
Ask'd kindly of his generous friends at home:
His father and Constantio first he nam'd;
But, ah! Maria's name was not forgot;
He seem'd to dwell with rapture on the sound,
And, as no answer he at first receiv'd,
Repeated his affectionate demand.

(Ungentle Theodore! ah! cruel youth!
How could you spurn such kind solicitude?

How could you check the faintest ray of hope,
Beaming in modest and respectful smiles?
How could you thus repay the fond demand,
And answer mild affection with a frown?)

"Seymour, 'tis time to undeceive thy hopes,

"To check the impulse of aspiring pride:

"Had not Constantio told me, trust me, now,

"I ne'er could have surmis'd thy vanity

"Presum'd to seek my sister's bridal hand.

"Where were thy thoughts astray? where me-

"mory

"To tell you what, and where, and who you are?

"Let me advise you, as the passion came,

"So let it vanish like those trivial things

"Which idly pass, remember'd while in sight,

"Known while enjoy'd, forgotten as they go."

"Like trivial things!" (with sigh of deep despair,

That plainly shew'd the source from whence it

sprung,

Was well nigh bursting with a poignant grief;)

"Like trivial things!" he answer'd, "O, my

"friend!

"(I once could safely urge the sacred tie,

"But anger's frown has chas'd sweet friendship's

"smile,)

"Were love a trivial thing, why should I own,

"Nay, wish not to decrease, its potent sway?"

- “ Were love a trivial thing, why need I sigh,
“ And vainly mourn what now indeed appears
“ A harsh decree of fate ? (But that my guide,
“ My kind protector, teaches me to know,
“ And demonstration tells me to confess,
“ Whatever happens, happens for the best :)
“ Is love a trivial thing, that, when I tell
“ Love's gentle message, friendship's brow shall
“ change,
“ From mild and amiable serenity,
“ To the sad emblems of ungovern'd wrath ?
“ O, gentle Theodore, did you e'er love,
“ You would confess it irresistible,
“ And feel for those who now despairing sigh.
“ Victim yourself of love's all-ruling power,
“ Humanity would dictate what your tongue
“ With willing pity gladly would obey.
“ O, do not thus in anger turn away ;
“ I will endeavour (painful is the task !)
“ To talk no more of that which angers thee :
“ But why I should thus cause that settled frown,
“ I am not yet aware. Is love a crime ?
“ Must I, because I love, be guilty too
“ Of vices which my bosom never knew,
“ But with a shudder, marking my disgust ?
“ Forbid it, Heaven ! No, Theodore ; I own
“ Your lovely sister I indeed adore ;

" I see Maria moving in a sphere
" Above my humble reach ; I will not dare,
" Low as I am, to court ambition's aid ;
" But, till a mother's anxious footsteps reach
" A long-lost son, and wealthily return,
" (I never knew a wish for wealth till now,)
" I yet will tread the path mark'd out by fate,
" Tho' love still keep dominion in my breast."
" Then from this moment," Theodore replied,
" Come not within my sight, or dread my rage ;
" For he who still aspires, in spite of all
" That fate seems to decree, or Prudence warn,
" Should feel the punishment presumption me-
" rits."

Seymour essay'd to speak, alas ! in vain :
He sunk, o'erwhelm'd with grief, upon the turf ;
And Theodore with hasty step had fled.
Chance at that time conducted to the spot
The fair Maria. She, kind, pitying maid !
With all the strength that nature had bestow'd,
Tried to remove him to th' adjacent bank.
She saw Constantio : with melodious note
(What harmony more musically sweet,
Than notes inspir'd by benevolence !)
She made him hear. He flew to her relief,
And laid the gentle Seymour on a bench,
Whose head reclining still insensible,

Found his Constantio's breast sweet friendship's
pillow.

One hand he held ; the other yet remain'd
Lock'd in Maria's, where it still had been
Since first she view'd him helpless on the turf ;
And often would she anxiously essay
To bring the native colour to his cheek.
Fond, gen'rous maid ! thy care was not in vain :
He soon recover'd, and beheld his friend.

" Thee, my Constantio ! " faintly he exclaim'd ;
(And finding still one arm remain'd confin'd,
He turn'd his eyes, and saw the lovely maid ;)

" Maria ! O too kind ! too gen'rous fair ! "

He sunk again upon Constantio's breast.

Again reviv'd, they sought old Albert's cot.

He met them e'er they reach'd the arbor'd door.

" Come, come, my son, " (to Seymour,) " come, "
said he ;

" You must fatigue the arm on which you lean.

" A lady's arm ! my Seymour—In my time

" The fashion was not thus—A youth rejoic'd

" On all occasions to support the fair.

" It is man's duty. "

" Aye, and woman's 'tis, "

(Replied Maria, with a chiding smile,)

" To aid the weak : and, trust me, when we found

" A youth we all—"

“ We all must hold so dear,”

Constantio kindly added, (for he saw

The blush o’erspread Maria’s conscious cheek,)

“ Stretch’d at full length upon the dewy turf,

“ We thought thy efforts haply might prevent

“ The fatal tendency of morning damp.

“ We both are ignorant what length of time

“ Our Seymour there remain’d, bereft of help.”

“ Then let me hear, my child,” said Albert;

“ speak,

“ How was it? Were you stricken suddenly?

“ Come, boy; come in; and you, his gen’rous

“ friends,

“ Will not refuse to grace my humble roof.

“ There resting in my chair, shall you relate

“ All you remember of the sad mischance.”

Seymour, the only time in all his life,

Replied not to kind Albert’s friendly speech:

But ’twas not disobedience; lost, he gaz’d;

(His ev’ry sense, but that of gazing, lost.)

The lovely object was the heav’nly maid.

Albert perceiv’d, but pardon’d the neglect:

The cause, indeed, was full authority.

“ My Seymour hears me not. Ah! well,” he said,

“ Tis natural for youth, in lovely bloom,

“ To prove attractive to youth’s roving eye;

“ And wrinkled age with pleasure can submit,

“ When mem’ry brings to mind what once has
“ been.”

Seymour withdrew his eye ; Maria blush’d ;
But neither the discovery displeas’d.
Their fine eyes sparkled ; and a stubborn sigh
Would break its gentle prison, spite of all
Their efforts the sly tell-tale to detain.
The mutual sigh escap’d not unobserv’d :
Their eyes now met again, and now retir’d,
Fearing to look on that they wish’d to see ;
Like the young school-boy for his master’s smile,
Who hopes a nod, tho’ fears the rigid frown.
The bloom that left his cheek once more return’d,
Albert requested Seymour to begin.

“ Excuse my silence,” said the gentle youth ;
“ Nor urge me to repeat what must afflict
“ Such hearts as these my noble friends possess.”
“ What means my friend ?” Constantio quick ex-
claim’d ;
“ Tell me, was I unknowingly the cause ?”
“ Or, I ?” rejoin’d Maria : “ heav’n forbid !”
Continued she with eager energy.
“ Neither,” he answer’d : “ neither you, my
“ friend ;
“ Nor you, too kind Maria. Spare me then,
“ Nor let me dare with sorrow to repay

"Such noble generosity and love."

All would not do : they beg'd again to hear ;

And thus he said, (oft sighing as he spoke :)

"A slight misunderstanding, I believe ;

"I scarce remember now the real cause ;

"Your brother Theodore mistook my words,

"And anger flash'd where friendship us'd to dwell.

"No wonder then if I, unus'd to see

"Ought but good nature smiling on his cheek,

"Was shock'd thus much at the uncommon
"change."

"My brother angry !" said Maria : "sure

"You were deceiv'd ; and fancy wrought the
"frown.

"He seldom is displeas'd : but this I know,

"You are the last of all his intimates,

"I'm sure, on whom he could with anger look."

"O were it so, then I were blest indeed.

"I might, perhaps, have been in fault, 'tis true ;

"But if I was, I know not now my crime ;

"A crime that chas'd the sunshine from his brow,

"Which us'd to cheer me ever as I spoke."

Albert observing still his voice was faint,

Propos'd, nay urg'd him to lie down awhile,

And by refreshing slumbers to recruit

That strength he had so much enfeebled. He

Had kept in mind young Seymour's artless words ;
And guest the cause of Theodore's revenge
Was in return for his well-meant advice.
He held his peace ; nor let a word escape
That might attract their curiosity,
And render both uneasy at the tale.
They rose when Seymour went, and, as they walk'd,
Constantio thus obtain'd his only wish ;
To know the sigh that 'scap'd Maria's breast,
Was for his worthy, tho' despairing friend.

" I pity Seymour."—" So, indeed, do I,"

She answer'd with emphatic tenderness.

" But what are we to think, Constantio ?

" Can we accuse a brother, till we know

" If he deserves even our gentlest chiding ?

" And can we see a friend like Seymour mourn

" In modest terms, so mildly amiable ?

" I should be loth to have remain with me

" The power of decision, in the cause

" Of a dear brother, and a—"

" Dearer friend.

" Mean you not so ?" rejoin'd he : " say, my love :

" Ne'er hesitate to own thy bosom's thoughts.

" Am I not right, Maria ? Tell me, now,

" Were Seymour rich, and of my brother's rank,

" Would you not from the gay unmeaning swarm,

" (Who buz around the throne of loveliness,

- “ Unconscious, careless of its inward worth,)”
“ Single him out a worthy favorite ?”
“ Constantio,” she replied with firmest tone,
“ Trust me, his opulence would sway me not :
“ A mind like his is far beyond the worth
“ Of all that wealth can purchase or possess.
“ Hear him converse ; what purity of mind,
“ What moral virtue breaks upon the ear !
“ No useless word he speaks ; from all he says
“ We gain some new exalted sentiment,
“ That shews him worthy of old Albert’s care.
“ We wonder at his knowledge ; soon we feel
“ Amazement swell, and burst to admiration.”
“ I wish no more, my love,” Constantio said ;
“ I see thy partiality, and feel -
“ More joy at this long-wish’d discovery,
“ Than if a monarch sought Maria’s love.
“ He loves my sister, long have I perceiv’d :
“ And yesterday his passion he declar’d,
“ In terms of such unparell’d respect,
“ Such ardent love, and yet such modest hope,
“ I could not but relieve his anxious doubt.
“ He mourn’d his orphan state, his doubtful birth,
“ (Still ignorant of where he first drew breath.)
“ He sighs despair, and yet requests to hope ;
“ In which fond hope indulging since we met,
“ He told his tale perhaps to Theodore ;

- . “ (I cannot doubt but that must be the cause
“ Of his displeasure, and of Seymour’s grief ;))
“ Who yesternight was vex’d at the advice
“ Fraternal love impel’d me to attempt ;
“ And threaten’d wrath on Albert, and my friend,
“ As the dictators of my schooling words.
“ I heard him swear his sister should not wed
“ An outcast orphan, poverty’s lean child,
“ Object of scorn, derision, and contempt.”
“ My dear, dear brother,” she replied, “ from you
“ T’would be ingratitude to hide a thought :
“ My sighs are but for him ; my heart now beats,
“ Still sadly doubting his recovery.
“ Our friendly intimacy was approv’d
“ By my dear father, who has often join’d
“ Our mirthful sports ; all which assist to bind
“ The tie of social unanimity.
“ Oft has he bade me mark his modest mien,
“ His mild respect, and yet his manly voice.
“ His actions follow’d up his noble words :
“ My father, who first taught me to admire,
“ Made admiration kindle into love.—
“ But see, they beckon ; let us on with speed ;
“ We make them wait, unconscious of the hour.”
She took Constantio’s arm, they tript along ;
He, joyful at the long-wish’d happy news ;
She, that the sweet confession now was o’er.

From that sad day, if e'er Constantio met
His angry brother, oft he would revive
His friend's still hopeless cause; but still in vain.
At length, when Theodore no more could curb
That ruling pride that sway'd his youthful breast,
He fought his new made friends, and thought in
 them
He found full recompence for that contempt,
To which he ign'rantly interpreted
A loving brother's kind solicitude.
Three weeks had this short friendship been possess'd;
But in that time, alas! how oft the rule
He had so frequent vow'd to keep—was broken!
They met by turns, perhaps three times a week,
And each time was he urg'd to raise the stake.
At first he kept his firm unalter'd vow;
But ere he thrice had touch'd the magic cards,
He stagger'd, and consented to the game,
Which was from shillings to half crowns advanc'd.
They stopt not here: 'twas crowns they now pro-
 pos'd;
And as thro' dang'rous cunning policy,
He had of late been much allow'd to win,
From crowns to gold they found an easy task
To get him to accede to. Now behold
The party who, while shillings was the stake,
Could play with pleasure, cheerfully content;

Behold those faces, where sereneſt joy
Seem'd ever to inhabit, ſadly chang'd
To frowns of ſullen anger, and deſpair.
For now the game ran high ; each youth ſeem'd
 fix'd
On gain—that ſubtle ruin of content ;
And Theodore, who once abhor'd an oath,
And ſhudder'd at ſo impious a thought,
Would ſwear, and bet, as eager as the reſt ;
A hapleſs proof how ſoon vice gains her end,
If ever prudence quits the youthful breaſt.
And when once conſcience yields to its attack,
In vain is reſolution to avoid
Thoſe ſorrows which in conſequence ariſe.
But, ah ! one evil now had overta'en
Poor Theodore ; who, drinking in his turn,
Had ne'er till now perceiv'd how much the game
Had leſſen'd that which he before had gain'd.
His private purſe he op'd ; he knew his loſs ;
Driv'n to extremity, he raſhly dar'd
To venture note by note, and ſo retrieve :
But no ; the tricks of ſharpers will prevail
O'er inexperience : he, too, had forgot
The kind advice of Albert ; and now, ſtrip'd
Of ev'ry guinea that he once poſſeſt,
And every note he risk'd to call them back,
Aroſe, and left them his loſt ſpoil to ſhare.

Albert, who once again had giv'n advice,
And once again receiv'd a haughty check,
Prompted by duty, reverence, esteem,
Had warn'd old Mountague to save his son
From ruin quickly unavoidable,
By strictly charging him ne'er more to meet,
Or even speak to, these his treach'rous friends:
"For such," said Albert, "I am well convinc'd,
"Nay thoroughly inform'd, they all three are.
"Respect for you, and pity for your son,"
Continued he, "has caus'd me to procure
"The characters of these most dangerous men.
"Their characters I shudder to relate,
"And wish your son would never see them more."

As Theodore approach'd, his father saw
The change so visible in either eye.
No more he smiling grasp'd a parent's hand;
No more he cheerfully would read aloud;
No more relate the journal of the day,
Dwelling with pleasure on each mirthful tale;
He gravely pass'd his father; silent still;
When thus the kind, indulgent parent spake,
Thinking by kindness to reclaim his boy.
"My son, of late I have been much concern'd,
"Observing in your face a dismal change
"From cheerful gaiety to joyless gloom."

- “ I would not ask the cause ; I thought, perhaps,
“ It might distress *you*, and do *me* no good.
“ But still increasing, rather than dispel’d,
“ I feel more anxious now to know and soothe
“ The cause of that uneasiness, so plain
“ Appearing deeply rooted on your brow.
“ The worthy Albert now has prov’d himself
“ The friend of both : he told me all he said
“ When first he met you coming from your friends,
“ And mourn’d his caution ineffectual :
“ But generosity still sway’d his breast ;
“ And when he found advice would not prevail,
“ He came and warn’d me of the dreadful snare
“ Laid for thee by insinuating youth,
“ Who, under friendship’s mask, profane the name;
“ And flatter, while they wish but for thy ruin.
“ I see all is not right ; but should it be
“ (I’ve more than once had reason to expect)
“ That you have need of money, having lost
“ All that compos’d your temporary stock,
“ Or if your honour is in pawn for debt,
“ Make me your friend, your only confident.
“ Accept these notes ; in value fifty pounds.
“ If they fall short of paying what you owe,
“ Tell me sincerely ; let me know the whole :
“ I will not chide you more ; experience
“ We most of us must buy to know its worth.

“ One thing I must command ; you, I am sure, ”

“ Will cheerfully with filial zeal obey :

“ Shun these deceitful friends ; dread their approach ;

“ Resolve no more to join the treach’rous gang.”



PART V.

I see the circling hunt of noisy men
 But law's inclosure, leap the mounds of right,
 Pursuing and pursu'd, each other's prey,
 As wolves for rapine, as the fox for wiles.

Young.

Few bring back at eve
 Immaculate the manners of the morn.
 Something we thought is blotted; we resolv'd,
 Is shaken; we renounc'd, returns again.

Young.

Let us
 Act with cool prudence, and with manly temper,
 As well as manly firmness.
 'Tis godlike magnanimity to keep,
 When most provok'd, our reason calm and clear.

Thompson.

“DOES then my father,” Theodore exclaim’d,
 Next morning, as he rose, “does *he* suspect
 “The honor and fair dealing of my friends?
 “Unjust suspicion cancels the kind deed
 “Which else his love had wrought. Must I re-
 solve
 “No more to see these friends? my last re-
 source!
 “My brother tutors me; old Albert chides;

“ Maria seems to shun me ; Seymour too ;
“ All join to make me wretched ; but those three,
“ With whom I have enjoy’d so many hours,
“ And till last night I had my share of gain ;
“ How then can they deceive me ? ’Tis but fair
“ To try with this some portion to retrieve,
“ Perhaps the whole, I lost when last we met.”
Indulging the idea, he sought the path
Which led from out the garden to the road :
There on a bench, o’ershadown’d by the arms
Wide-spreading from the elm trees’ lofty top,
He op’d his book. Alas ! the blushing page
Taught not reveal’d Religion’s sacred truths ;
Moral or practical philosophy ;
Dwelt not with wonder on God’s works above,
Nor pointed out each heavenly ornament :
Told not how Milton sang in strains sublime,
Nor how immortal Shakespear’s fancy wrote :
Shew’d not how Pope or Dryden’s tuneful verse
Could waft imagination into bliss ;
Shew’d not the beauties of th’ historic page,
Nor charm’d the wand’ring fancy with a tale,
The diction, ease ; morality the theme ;
But taught the Gamester’s art ; to rule the card ;
Or throw the dice at hazard’s varying chance.
Here, while he read, he heard the well known
voice

Of Seymour talking in fond strains of love ;
Answer'd by sweet Maria's frequent thanks.
He started up with anger in his looks,
And leapt the fence which hid them from his
view.

The cause which authoris'd the fond discourse
Was of a nature fully powerful.

Maria oft, e'er breakfast was prepar'd,
Would much delight to hear the morning song
Of the gay warbling tenants of the grove.
There on a bank alone she'd sit, and read,
While fancy ranging ever undisturb'd,
Brought the sweet subject of the page to view.
She ever us'd to love the tuneful place ;
But now, perhaps, her Seymour's residence
Appearing at small distance thro' the trees,
Might be still more attractive than the song
Of the sweet birds in mellow harmony.
Here had she rov'd, or near o'erstept the bounds
She usually had chosen for her seat ;
And while intent on Gay's sweet Pastorals,
The spot seem'd apposite for *rural sports*.
And now a rustling in the hedge disturb'd
Her tranquil study : when she turn'd her head,
A man, in hideous mask, and arm'd, appear'd
To her affrighted view. She scream'd aloud,

While he demanded money with an oath,
To force her to immediately comply.
Her purse she drew, which eagerly he snatch'd;
But scarce a minute past, when from the hedge
Rush'd Seymour like a lion on his prey.
Two furious blows he struck at either arm:
His cudgel broke, exhausted with the force:
The robber fled, nor did the youth pursue;
His thoughts were on Maria. She, sweet girl!
Had fainted as he overleapt the hedge;
Dreading to view a second wretch in him:
But when she op'd her still dejected eye,
As fearing to look up; when Seymour spoke
In accents softly welcome; words of thanks
Were wanting to express her gratitude.
She call'd him her preserver, said she ow'd
More than her life could ever recompense.
'Twas then he dar'd (while kneeling at her feet)
Declare his high aspiring passion; then
He own'd the conflict in his noble breast,
Between cold duty and all-conq'ring love.
She could not answer; but in one sweet look,
She said far more than volumes could explain.
'Twas bliss to him; he knew what check'd her
speech;
He saw the barrier to happiness;
And having thrice upon her lovely hand

Imprest an ardent kiss, he swore no more
To start a subject which at such a time
Must cause a mutual uneasiness.
She took his arm ; and as they walk'd along,
She cheer'd him with her innocent discourse,
Till, coming to the spot where Theodore
Sat opposite, nor saw them till they spoke,
He bad adieu in terms that well became
His station, and his spotless sentiments ;
Which she return'd so kindly affable,
That rous'd her brother to behold the cause.
She scarce could check the impulse of his rage.
Seymour remain'd, still fearing his revenge
Would light on the dear object of his heart :
But, no ; on him was all his anger shower'd.
He thus forbid him e'er to venture more
Within the bounds of Mountague's estate.
“ Proud foolish youth ! thou heedest not, I see,
“ The warning I have given thee before ;
“ But hear me now : if e'er thou dar'st approach
“ Even so near as to yon garden gate,
“ To think to view that thou can'st never reach,
“ To my revenge I will resign the curb,
“ And punish fore the insults I've receiv'd.”
“ If I to day have merited your thanks,”
(Said Seymour to Maria, as he went,)
“ Those thanks you have so plenteously bestow'd,

“ Blest in the thought, felicity’s my lot ;
“ But to thy brother let me thus reply :
“ I never did, nor ever will offend,
“ Intending an offence ; but since ’tis so,
“ I trust around the cottage in the grove,
“ Are pleasures to be found, to equal those
“ Which play around thy mansion, saving this,
“ Thy lovely sister’s presence. Fare ye well !”
They separated ; Seymour slowly back,
Where half-way stood an oak’s remaining trunk,
Inviting weary travellers to rest.
’Twas here he sat in silent meditation ;
’Twas here he heard what he alone should hear ;
For he ne’er practis’d list’ning ; and his care
Was to prevent, and not to cause distress.
Maria sought her room ; and Theodore
Renew’d his book awhile ; then slowly walk’d
Along the path divided from the road
But by a fence, which hid nought from his view.
He heard his name twice call’d ; and looking up,
Saw his friend Clareson hastily approach.
He once attempted to avoid his sight ;
But fear of shame’s degrading laughter, check’d
The motion of his undetermin’d steps.
Clareson o’erleapt the fence, and on they walk’d,
Till chance directed them at once to stop
Right opposite to where young Seymour sat,

Hid by a clump of bushes from their view ;
And Clareson his proposal thus began.

He told him that he had intended long
Advising all their future merriment
Should be at some bye unfrequented house
Held ; where their servants might not e'en suspect
Their mode of recreation. 'Twas, indeed,
No sin ; but people would from each to each
So magnify proceedings of this kind,
That 'twas on all accounts adviseable
To use precaution when they met again.
(Still silent Theodore ! could'st thou not surmount
The baneful magic of a gamester's voice ?
And could'st thou so forget thy father's gift,
And strict injunctions ne'er again to meet
Thy treacherous invet'rate enemies ?)
Silent he stood, and Clareson thus renew'd
His fatal arguments. He knew, he said,
A man who kept a room, ('twas some time since,)
And who dar'd never scruple to permit
Men of their consequence to be his guests.
" But still," said Theodore, " he may allow
" All those who choose to join: and then, you
 know,
" All yet may be discover'd." " Pooh !" replied
The subtle Clareson ; " masks were always us'd

"Whene'er they met, I have been there myself,
 "And hope, ere long, they'll see me there again.
 "Suppose we say to-morrow? Hey! my friend?
 "I'll tell both Moore and Raymond to be there,
 "And get the masks: at one o'clock we meet;
 "'Tis my own thought, and suits as well as night.
 "Nay, better, as suspicion then must sleep,
 "And we shall taste the pleasure undisturb'd.
 "Then dear, dear hazard shall succeed dull whist.
 "O, Theodore! the sound of rattling dice,
 "The lucky nick that gains the destin'd stake,
 "Produces joy which cards can never cause!"
 The scheme so suited Theodore, (who wish'd
 Unnotic'd to endeavor to retrieve
 The sum he had so lately lost at play,)
 He willingly consented to the plan;
 And, pleas'd with the idea, that unperceiv'd
 He might indulge with his beloved friends,
 Ne'er gave a thought to duty, or respect,
 A parent's strict injunction should command;
 But left him, promising to meet in time.

How strange there should be harmony in words,
 Alluring giddy youth from virtue's path,
 So far beyond parental admonition!
 But thus it is, or thus it seems to be.
 Kind Providence makes innocence its care,

And leads its fav'rite into virtue's road,
Yet wisely leaves a path by which to stray,
If once it dare to listen to the voice,
Or view with wishful eye the tempting shape,
That Vice and Folly sport in to delude ;
Ambitious of still more felicity
Than in content already it possesses.
Conscience is plac'd the ruling governor
O'er all the passions ; and when once expos'd
To Vice and Folly's treacherous persuasion,
If it submit, (and 'gainst united arts
Of such great pow'r 'tis difficult to stand,
If once the fatal parley is agreed,)
The whole main force must suffer by the loss ;
As a whole host of men, their gen'ral slain,
And Prudence, Resolution, Fortitude,
Who once were valued equal to their worth,
All fail, depriv'd of conscience to command.
His father's kind advice was now forgot ;
His gen'rous gift was thought on now no more,
But as the means of banishing the sound
Advice had left still tingling in his ear.
Seymour in haste return'd to Albert's cot,
And duty bad him (word for word) relate
What he had just discover'd.

“ Once again,”
Said Albert, as he finish'd the account,

" Will we endeavour to restore the youth
" To reason and morality. In vain
" I yet have tried ; but still I may succeed ;
" The plot I now have thought of seems to suit
" So well with their intentions. Masks will aid
" Our excellent design : you shall know all
" As soon as I have seen Lord Mountague."

He left him, and was walking from the cot,
When the good Mountague himself appear'd ;
Who sought his son, and for a morning walk
Had kindly lengthen'd his intended search,
To pay the good old hermit of the grove
A friendly visit at his rural hut.
They enter'd, and young Seymour quick with-
drew,

When Albert told him all he just had heard ;
And then confest his plan to bring him back
To apt reflection on the shameful life
To which he had by cunning been ensnar'd,
And which he led in company with thieves.
He said he thought the only way now left
Was to disguise, and join the gambling crew :
There to behold the manner of the game,
Strictly to watch the skilful trickery
Of nimble-finger'd sharpers, and the arts
They us'd to gain the vast enormous stake
Despair might make the victim rashly risk.

If such they prov'd, he had a last resource,
Which he would not explain, till they had seen
Whether 'twas so or not; and as the room
Was easy of access in masquerade,
They might securely enter, and observe
The tricks of knaves the while suspicion slept.
The plan seem'd feasible; 'twas soon agreed;
And Albert promis'd to conduct him there
At the appointed hour; and resolv'd
To let no action pass by unobserv'd:
For well he knew the various deceits
(By sad experience taught) that sharpers use
To gain the high depending stake; he knew
That inexperience must of course become
To artifice and fraud an easy prey;
And therefore he resolv'd once again
To call a wretched scene to memory,
Which nought but the high reverence he bore
The hapless parent ever could have caus'd.
He was prepar'd to mingle in the game,
And try, by sad conviction, to produce
In Theodore's contaminated breast,
A sense of his destructive course of life.

Now turn we to Maria; who, before
Three hours had elaps'd since her alarm,
Receiv'd a parcel from her servant maid,

In at the gate mysteriously thrown.
She wonder'd while she broke the yielding seal,
And saw a picture that her purse contain'd
When that the villain snatch'd it in the grove;
(The dear resemblance of a mother's face;
The parting pledge of a fond mother's love.)
'Twas wrapt in many papers, to extend
The packet to a reasonable size;
And oft she look'd in vain; for not a word
Appear'd informing her from whence it came.
At length on one, a scrap of rumpled white,
That seem'd a letter's counterpart, she read,
"Charles Raymond."—"O, 'tis he! 'tis he!" she
cried;
"I've seen the villain in my brother's friend!"
She had already told him of the theft,
(Who oft most solemnly had sworn revenge:)
Yet fearing anger, doubtless, would impel
That fury oft so dreadful in effect,
If he should know the author of the deed,
She kept it close, a sure, tho' dreadful proof
Of his associate's sullied principles.
Her father had lamented more than once,
In confidence to his beloved girl,
The change in Theodore; and well she knew
Some plan was now about to be pursu'd,
T' endeavour to recall him e'er too late.

What then so strong an argument as this
Her pocket now contain'd? She told not one;
But fought her father's further confidence,
Which he with pleasure gave her to enjoy.
He told her of the plot they had in view,
And promis'd to relate the whole account
When he return'd from the heart-breaking trial.
The hour arriv'd, and Mountrague was met
By Albert; and in masks they fought the house;
And as the man announc'd to those at play,
(Moore, Clarefon, and their victim Theodore,)
Two gentlemen beg'd leave to join their set,
They saw the eyes of Clarefon sparkling bright,
For joy to think what fresh supplies approach'd;
And Theodore seem'd eager as the rest.
"But where can Raymond be?" amaz'd he cried;
"He us'd not do delay. My dearest friend
"Must be unwell, I fear: can any tell
"The cause of his neglect?" "Aye," Moore re-
plied:
"He bruise'd his arm this morning by a fall,
"And keeps his bed: But, come; ne'er think of
"him;
"'Tis not for us to think.—Come—Here's a
"main."
Now all was silent, save the founding dice,
Till fortune frown'd on Theodore again,

And seem'd determin'd to reward deceit,
For Clareson gain'd what he and Albert lost.
Mountague likewise car'd not how he far'd,
For Albert had advis'd him at the first,
And promis'd him he had sufficient cause,
For what indeed was in appearance strange.
The game ran high, and Theodore once more
Was stript of ev'ry shilling he possess'd.
But Albert more than once detected Moore
In an attempt to change a losing throw;
And tho' he made it not an open case,
Jog'd Mountague, who plainly saw the act.
And now commenc'd the woe-fraught dialogue,
Which must be mention'd here as from the mouths
Of those from whom the diff'rent speeches fell,
As better calculated to express
The meaning in the clearest point of view,
Than in the way we have as yet pursued.



PART VI.

And therefore wert thou bred to virtuous knowledge,
 And wisdom early planted in thy soul,
 That thou might'st know to rule thy fiery passions,
 To bind their rage, and stay their headlong course.

Rowe.

Tho' plung'd in ills, and exercis'd in care,
 Yet never let the noble mind despair;
 When prest by dangers, and beset by foes,
 The gods their timely succour interpose;
 And when our virtue sinks, o'erwhelm'd with grief,
 By unforeseen expedients bring relief.

Phillips.

MOUNTAGUE, THEODORE, ALBERT, CLARESON,
 and MOORE, (*masked.*)

Theodore.

THAT throw decides my fate; there rest my
 hopes;

My all is doubled, or my all is lost. (*Throws.*)

Moore. 'Tis lost, indeed!

Theodore.

Then I am lost indeed:

For never can I bear to see the face

Of him I have so vilely disobey'd :
No more can I approach, and see the smile
Bedeck his aged cheek ; or smile return,
While my base heart denies the cheerful brow.

(*Aside.*)

Clarefon. What, meditating, Theodore ? Come.

Theodore.

Peace !

To you it is I owe the misery
That resignation scarce has power to bear :
In that last stake, O, what a mine of wealth
(Or what's more dear than wealth, by far) I've
lost !

A father's love, a father's happiness ;
My honour, which was pledg'd to play no more.
My last poor guinea gone ! what now should
follow,

To suit with both my feelings and deserts,
But that this arm, which ye have taught to sting,
Should end my inward torture with my life ?

Mountague. This wounds me deep !

(*Aside to Albert.*)

Albert to Mountague. But yet you do not know
If 'tis the impulse of despair in grief,
Or penitence unfeigned for his guilt.

Moore. Pooh ! prithee talk not so despairingly :
Who knows how luck may turn ? (*To Theodore.*)

Theodore. Talk not of that ;
My purse is empty as myself of worth,
Empty as are my promises, or hopes.
When first we met, how cheerfully we play'd !
Like social friends in innocent employ.
But soon you vilely drew me into guilt ;
Awaking thoughts, which else had ever slept,
To lead me to the fatal goal of ruin.
To you I owe my guilt ; to you my grief,
My loss of honor, truth, parental love,
My banishment from a fond parent's house ;
For never will I dare approach his gate.
To you I owe a ruin'd orphan's curse,
Take it between you. (*Frantically.*)

(*To Mount. and Albert.*) You seem strangers here.
O, if you still are strangers to the vice
Of these accomplish'd masters, still be so :
Let me perform some service e'er I sink
From noble Mountague's first son and heir,
To a mean wanderer, who lives by scraps.
Let this, my fate, deter you from the path
Which, when once enter'd, never can be left.
If you have not begun the vile career,
You know not how impossible it is

To quit th' attraction of such magic power.
 Let my example save one youth from ruin.
 'Twill throw a gleam of comfort on a soul
 Sullied by sin, and darken'd by despair.

(*Mountague aside to Albert.*) Mark his advice ; 'tis
 what myself would say :
 Distress has brought him back to penitence.

(*Albert aside to Mountague.*) Do not yet shew your-
 self ; you cannot tell
 Whether 'twill guard him 'gainst a future snare,
 I see in Clareson's eye a subtle smile,
 As if not yet content : he seems resolv'd
 To speak ; yet seems to fear his words' effect.

Theodore. Well may you whisper, well may you
 deride
 The victim driv'n to fate's extremest verge ;
 But do not drive me farther than the brink ;
 Indeed, it wants not much to plunge me in,
 Where sweet oblivion finishes my woes.

Albert. Mistaken youth ! think'st thou it is de-
 creed
 For guilt to end the torture of remorse
 By sinning more against the heav'nly will ?
 Thinkest thou sweet oblivion to gain ?

No ; if 'tis pain to bear the load of life,
Let resignation teach you to atone
For crimes which meet deserv'd chastisement.

(*Theodore amazed.*) Is this the house, the witness
of my crimes ?

Is it beneath this roof that I have lost
Such treasure irreclaimable ? is this
A house expos'd to riot and misuse,
Or Albert's cot in yonder peaceful grove ?
For such sweet sentiments his wisdom breathes,
Such is the worthy Hermit's pious strain.

(*Moore to Albert.*) Hermit, indeed ! What made
you join with us,
And with your canting tongue profane our rites ?
We never trouble hermits. Come, Sir, march ;
Or play your turn, and talk no more such stuff.

Clarefon. He shall not play ; he will infect the dice.
Let's leave him to his thoughts ; while we in deeds
Endeavour to atone for losing time,
In idly list'ning to his sanctity.

Moore. Come, quit the room.—O, no ; he may
look on :
We'll let him stay for reformation's sake.
And you, Sir, you may join us, if you please.

(*To Mountague.*)

As yet you have not troubled us with speech;
I like you for it: throw, and stand your chance.
But hang your curst long speeches—Sev'n's the
main!

Come, Theodore, I long for your last ten.

Theodore. I have not fixpence left to gain the
world.

Ha! Clarefon, why that smile at my distress?
Not yet content? You wish to see me mad.
Why, truly, little would produce your wish:
Increasing woes, like mine, require some skill
To combat with; they wound almost too deep.
This morn I might have rose the child of bliss;
A father's smiling love first met my view,
To say, my follies past were all forgot.
My honor pledg'd to merit his esteem,
Was as a bulwark 'gainst a future crime.
But, ah! my honor's lost; his love is gone;
His name disgrac'd, his offspring prov'd a curse:
But still I know his mild, his gen'rous soul;
He would not curse his boy, his Theodore:
Still would he press me to his bursting heart,
And while along his aged cheeks the tear
Would check th' intended smile, (as justice ought
To triumph over mercy, when inclin'd
To those unworthy of her clemency,)
The victory would still be unobtain'd;

So tenderness would lighten the decree
An injur'd parent justly should pronounce.
But no : I now have wrong'd him ; now have lost
A most indulgent father's confidence,
And haste from his offended sight for ever. (*Going.*)

Clarefon. And will you then reject a friendly
chance ?
Will you refuse, before you hear it made,
An offer that may set all right again ?

Theodore. Ha ! set all right ! 'tis far beyond the
pow'r
Of mortal possibility !—

Clarefon. Ar't sure ?
Two hundred pounds may yet perhaps perform
What feeble mortals might attempt in vain.

Theodore. Two hundred ! thrice that sum be-
long'd to me,
E'er thou and thy curst gang of pilferers—

Moore. Nay, prithee leave out *titles*, Theodore :
Are we then curst, because we won your cash ?
If so, you should rejoice : for, tho' you've lost
Your total stock, you've likewise lost a curse.

Theodore. Jestings but ill becomes you—

Clarefon. Heed him not;
But listen to thy true unalter'd friend;
I have an offer worthy your regard.

(Mountague aside to Albert.) O heav'n! if after
this he turn again

What can I hope? or what can I expect?
Let him behold his still fond father's face,
And let me save him from th' impending snare.
For still methinks I see dissembling smiles
Accompany young Clarefon's wily tongue;
As the fell snake, who, when intent to wound,
Comes bounding, clad in beauteous gaiety.

(Albert aside in answer.) Take my advice once
more, and try to curb
The fond emotion rising to impel
A quick discov'ry: should thy turn advance,
Refuse not then thy throw: my careless zeal
Provok'd them to dismiss me from the game.

Clarefon. You have a sister, Theodore.

Theodore. What of her? *(Stern.)*

Clarefon. Nay, do not stop me thus, before you
know
The purport of my speech. Think me your friend.
You have a sister, beautiful and young;

Of virtue and accomplishments far more
 Than one like me can dare aspire to gain :
 Should I attempt to ask her for my wife,
 You would with indignation spurn me hence,
 Unworthy of her hand ; with sharp reply,
 " My principles and mode of life denied
 " Love's purity to penetrate my heart."
 But trust me, Theodore, I love the maid,
 And would to-morrow marry her, if you
 Would but o'erlook those follies you have seen,
 And urge it as a common friend to both.
 In recompence for which, if you consent,
 Two hundred pounds shall instantly be your's.

Theodore. O, God ! am I then fall'n so low as
 this ?

What ! take a bribe to ruin spotless honor !
 For to a gambling libertine to wed
 A maid of such unsullied name and worth,
 Would be, in that unerring book, where all
 Our sins are register'd, inscrib'd no less.
 No, let me spurn the offer, as I would
 The base insulting villainous proposer.

Clarefon. Nay, at your choice ; it gives me no
 concern :

I can find pleasure with two hundred pounds
 Equal to what your sister's charms could give.

Death to the earth the father of his work

But she's been so busy that she's not even had time to think about it.

thought my offer liberal and fair; that was not

Of all you've lost in twenty minutes; aye,

Is it not, old friend Graybeard? All I ask

Is liberty to woo and win the maid,

What if the be attracted by his work

An offer as he could expect from you.

But, ah! should fortune be propitious now,

...the effect of the ...

Montague. It is an offer so uncommon, Sir,

It struck me very forcibly, I own ;
He could expect no better ; and, indeed,
I wonder he withstands to treat with you ;
Or, rather, treat you as you justly merit. (*Aside.*)
How should I joy to see his nervous arm
Dash to the earth the author of his woe,
Urg'd by a sense of this fresh injury !
But, ah ! he seems to smile : protect him heav'n !
O, no : he has rejected heaven's care,
And now must meet temptation as he can.

*(Clareson and Moore not finding Theodore answer,
look at him stedfastly, and are going.)*

Theodore. Stay, Clareson, stay ; and shall I be this
wretch ?
And vilely barter spotless innocence ?
But, no : he says he means not that. What then,
Does he imagine I can bear to see
My sister courted so unworthily ?
What if she be attracted by his words,
Caught by his wily snares, as I have been ;
How can I know myself the cruel cause,
And bear to see her in a gamester's arms ?
But, ah ! should fortune be propitious now,
And give me back, perhaps, tenfold my loss—
Why, what a fool am I to waste a thought !
It must be so. To lose the offer'd chance
Were folly in the extreme. (*Aside.*)

(*To Clarefon.*) O I will consent.
Give me the money, and the chance is yours.
Win her, and wear her; I'll not say you nay.

Clarefon. 'Tis ready: fifty for the first essay.

Theodore. Content—(*Throws.*)—'Tis mine!—A
hundred!

Clarefon. As you will.
With all my heart—'Tis mine!

Theodore. That cuts me deep.
Once more a hundred!

Clarefon. What, so bold again?

Theodore. Pshaw! throw! the devil!

Clarefon. Nay, 'tis as you please.
I have it.

Theodore. How! have I no more than this?
Clarefon, some dæmon favors every throw.
Come, Sir, now you and I will try a cast.

(*To Mountague.*)

Fifty on this—my last—'tis *make or mar*.
This single throw once more decides my fate,
Fills me with hope, or sinks me in despair,
Never to hope again.

Mountague. O fatal throw !
Does it depend on me to seal his fate ?
(*Afide to Albert.*)

Albert. Dispute it not, but quickly to the cast.

Theodore. Come, Sir ; ne'er fear me : tho' I lose
my all,
'Twill matter nought to you. Why how you shake !
Have you the palsy ?

(*Mountague aside.*) Must I too bear this ?
(*They throw.*)

Theodore. 'Tis thine !—my last, last note—my
only chance.
Curst be the throw, and doubly curst the dice !
Curst be those friends—

Moore. We'll tarry not your curse.
With you we meet again. (*To Mountague and Albert.*)

(*Clarefson to Theodore.*) Remember me.
(*They go out.*)

Theodore. Curst be those friends who led me to
the snare,
And curst the gainer of my last—

Albert.

O, hold!
Mad headstrong boy! restrain thy roving tongue:
Curse not thy father; he to whom you owe
Far more than all thy care can e'er repay.

(They unmask.)

Mountague. Yes, Theodore, thy father 'tis who
speaks.

O, Theodore! my son! that I should live
To see so sadly chang'd my sweetest hopes!
Thou wert the comfort of my waning years;
Thou wert thy sister's guardian; brother's friend:
Thou wert my chiefest hope; my dearest joy
Was but to trace in thee my youthful steps,
And in Maria view thy mother's form:
But, O! thy sister's guardian has betray'd,
Has barter'd his invaluable trust;
His brother's friendship has unjustly scorn'd;
His father's love has injur'd and forgot.
Hadst thou been told these things, what would'st
thou say

The cruel guardian's treach'ry did deserve?
Thy tongue would want appropriate terms to shew
The punishment he amply merited.
O, Theodore! 'tis thou—my son! my son!

Theodore. O highly injur'd goodness! do I hear
Those pardoning lips pronounce the name of son?

I was thy son: unworthy of the name,
Let me then bear the punishment my due.
But if you knew my agonizing pangs,
You would not wish them heighten'd or prolong'd.
Hast thou not heard me say a villain's words?
Hast thou not seen me play a villain's part?
When thou remember'st that, remember too,
I feel a villain's torturing remorse,
Without a hope for one poor ray of comfort.
Ha! one ray cheers my soul amid the gloom
Of melancholy heighten'd by despair:
I did not think I e'er should have renew'd
That old acquaintance once I held with bliss.
My sister is preserv'd! my father heard
The shameful contract, and his tender love
Will warn her to defeat th' approaching snare.
Adieu! my kind, my pious real friend;

(*To Albert.*)

Thy counsels have been scorn'd; thyself abus'd:
But you will pardon.—Ah! not that alone;
Man's pardon is not all: how can I dare,
For this accumulating load of sin,
To hope for pardon, where the word is bliss?
Sweet everlasting cancellor of guilt!
No, no.—O, Sir, let my example prove
A warning to Constantio.—Ah! but why?
He needs it not; he never scorn'd advice,
But treads the path of virtuous honesty,
While I despairing hasten from the world. (*Going.*)

Mountague. Stay, Theodore! the voice of penitence

(When I perceive th' atoning sounds unfeign'd)
Shall never plead in vain. O with what joy
Would I again embrace my eldest son!
Reclaim'd to Honor's path! O, Theodore!
Had'st thou avail'd thyself of Albert's words,
Had'st thou but ta'en his counsel, and resolv'd,
(But that thy eyes were dim'd by outward shew,
And flatt'ry's mask conceal'd their villain's hearts,)
Had'st thou resolv'd to watch with earnest eye
Each subtle sign, thou could'st not but perceive
That unfair dealing govern'd every throw,
And fraud obtain'd your money, not the game.
Still I perceive a settled misbelief
Pervade your countenance: thus then I'll clear
Myself from foul, unjust suspicion's guilt,
And thee restore, to me, and to thyself.
Come, let me clasp thee once more to my heart.
All is forgiven; all shall be forgot,
When you have seen, and own'd, the knavery,
That has undone you, in your faithless friends.
Albert and I will meet them here again,
And, as a proof that fraud obtain'd your gold,
The self same fraud in mine, and Albert's hands,
Shall then regain the plunder you have lost.

Albert. Come to my cot: the sorrows of my life,
The incidents which made me what I am,

I will relate, while you with wonder hear:
Then will you know my power to restore
The fums you've lost; and I for once will count
A crime an act of justice. What's obtain'd
By industry and justice should be kept,
And long may all such riches be enjoy'd;
But fraud must pilfer fraud; and in the act
I go that day to do, may heav'n regard
My pure intentions; not the deed itself;
My wish to open thy deluded eyes,
And not a crime that strikes me with abhorrence.

Theodore. O unexampled goodness! have I then
Obtain'd unpleaded pardon? am I still
The heir of noble Mountague, thy son?
O let me swear my future life shall shew
My best endeavour to deserve the name.

Mountague. My son, no more: but to old
Albert's cot

Let us withdraw, where he shall kindly tell
The memoirs of his youth: and you will see
(For I have heard him once his tale relate)
The triumphs he obtain'd o'er dark despair,
That dictated the crime of suicide;
A silent remedy for tort'ring grief,
Experience taught him to admonish you;
O how rejoic'd I was to find it struck

So forcibly the feelings of your heart!
Tho' now unanimously we *converse*,
I trust when next we meet at this curst house,
We shall depart unanimous in *thought*.
For 'tis the only wish of anxious age,
To teach gay youth to shun the snares of vice,
By strong conviction, that her specious art,
By flattery supported to delude,
Serves but to hide a dangerous enemy.

When the sweet cot they reach'd, attentive both
They heard the old man's tale, and oft remark'd
The sad similitude; which ever caus'd
More fervent thanks from Theodore to those
Who had so timely snatch'd him from his ruin.



PART VII.

The best sometimes from virtue's path recede;
But if th' intent be good, excuse the deed.

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will.

Shakespeare.

AND fair Maria claims attention now,
She watch'd till Mountague had sought the room
He made his frequent study; op'd the door;
And vent'ring in, was welcom'd by a smile.
She now display'd the picture, and the name
Which had accompanied it unobserv'd;
A mark of heavenly justice, to betray
The perpetrator of the brutal theft.
He bad her keep them till a time arriv'd
That they might be of wonderful avail,
Which time he would prepare her to expect.
This charming mark of filial confidence
He now return'd, by warning of the snare
Her gambling lover sily might attempt.
He told her not her brother had agreed,
Nor of the poor consideration given;
But said, he heard that Clareson had resolv'd

“ To win the daughter of Lord Mountague.”

It was enough to place her on her guard :

She vow'd obedience ever to his will,

And left him to reflect on what had past,

And form some plan to frustrate the design

The gamester for his offspring had in view.

Albert was introduc'd, and thus began :

“ My Lord, I long have ballanc'd in my mind,

“ Whether 'tis better to abide the loss,

“ Or risk a crime to call it back again.

“ But thus can conscience make the crime an act

“ Of justice ; nay, of charity to both.

“ We both are well convinc'd by unfair means

“ They gain'd the kind supplies your bounty gave

“ Your son from time to time. We likewise know

“ 'Tis justice to defend the weak oppress'd ;

“ And as we cannot right the injur'd youth,

“ But by the act by which he has been wrong'd

“ Employ'd against his plunderers, no crime

“ Can that be call'd that justice so impels.

“ Again, it will appear but charity

“ Both to themselves, and all unwary youth,

“ On whom they might have fix'd their fatal eye,

“ Intending them for Theodore's successors.

“ Now, if we gain the sums their fraud has won,

“ They may resolve to quit the dang'rous game,

“ And with despair, repentance may unite,

“ Preventing farther acts of sin in them,

“ And saving many victims from their snare.”
Such reasoning to Mountague appear'd
Extremely just, and suited to his wish ;
And when the time appointed was arriv'd,
They went, accompanied by Theodore,
In a disguise that quite conceal'd his age,
To meet the victims of their just deceit.
Raymond had join'd his friends ; tho' still so weak
He scarce could sit upright : but hope of gain
From the rich stranger, (for 'twas by that name
They all distinguish'd noble Mountague)
Had power to draw him from the sickly couch.
Albert assum'd a different disguise,
And play'd with spirit to keep up the scene.
And now the bets ran high, the stakes were great,
And Mountague began to feel the power
The magic dice possess'd by Albert given ;
For they had been so cunningly prepar'd,
The winning numbers had been twice engrav'd ;
And thus the chances doubly favour'd him.
This was the point which conscience could not
smooth,
Till, by an apt reflection on the cause,
'Twas reconcil'd to countenance the deed.
Sighs, winks, and exclamations were in vain,
Tho' oft repeated by the gambling crew.
Albert and Mountague gain'd every throw,
Except just *here* and *there*, to take away

Suspicion, which might else have been awakened ;
While Theodore in silent wonder stood,
Observing how they seldom miss the stake.
He now perceiv'd how he had been misled,
Nay, really plunder'd, by the men he thought
Patterns of friendship, honesty, and truth.
He saw them, spite of all their means to cheat,
To Albert yield, foil'd by superior skill.
Each way they tried produc'd the same effect ;
All prov'd unequal to the higher throw
Of Mountague and Albert, or appear'd
Deceit too open to escape their eye.
And then in shame they would excuse themselves,
As " not perceiving " they had dealt unfair.
Each had been home, or sent for an increase,
Which went the way the rest had gone before ;
And tho' they knew some unfair means were tried
(Tho' imperceptible) they dare not speak,
Conscious of their attempts to do the same,
Tho' all unable to escape conviction.
Their stock exhausted, and the game broke up,
(For they had all agreed to play no more,)
They could not keep their tongues from violence,
And were proceeding to a loud abuse,
When Albert thus address'd them : " Yesterday
" I made my first appearance in your set ;
" I am the man at whom ye all so laugh'd,
" When I advis'd the youth ye basely wrong'd

“ Against the dreadful crime of suicide :
“ I could not but observe the unfair ways
“ By which ye gain’d, or rather *stole* the stakes ;
“ And grew resolv’d to play that game on you,
“ By which you vilely thus defrauded him.
“ When I was young, I too was led away
“ By a detested crew of gambling youth,
“ And deeds ensu’d would wound me to relate :
“ I learn’d the ways of sharpers ; oft deceiv’d
“ Unwary youth, who scoff’d at kind advice ;
“ And headlong plung’d, regardless of our snare,
“ Into the overwhelming dread abyss.
“ But by this deed of punishing a vice
“ I ever shall have fatal cause to curse,
“ I hope I merit pardon for the crime.
“ You cannot claim your right to what I’ve won.
“ Nor do I claim it as my own for use ;
“ But, on the first occasion that may chance,
“ Shall to the lawful owner all restore.
“ Few words are best ; your characters’ at stake ;
“ (I know ye, tho’ ye little think I do ;)
“ Bid ye be cautious how ye dare proceed :
“ The matter shall be secret from the world :
“ But if ye offer to maintain your right
“ To that ye so unlawfully purloin’d,
“ Expect the public eye to view your crimes,
“ Expect the public voice to mock your shame.”
They went. The gamesters, in amazement wrapt,

At first perceiv'd not they had left the room,
Till some few minutes past: and Clareson then
At length broke silence. "There is one thing
yet

"May set all right again; 'tis my turn now
"To use the sentence; once 'twas Theodore's;
"His sister may be won: her fortune then
"Will doubly recompence this evening's loss;
"And rest assur'd, my fellow sufferers,
"Ye both shall share the treasure. 'Twere unfair
"To share the loss, and not partake the gain."

The next day came; and, as they had agreed,
All met at an appointed rendezvous:
From thence they slowly walk'd to meet the
maid,
Whom, with her father, and his Theodore,
They saw advancing for an ev'ning's walk.
They all were welcom'd; and the lovely girl
Flew to the garden to prepare the tea,
In her dear father's favorite alcove.
She seem'd unconscious of each winning word
Or compliment that Clareson frequent gave;
And Mountague appear'd quite sociable,
And unsuspecting of th' intended scheme.
Seymour, who had not yet by them been seen,
Link'd arm in arm with kind Constantio,
Now join'd the party, welcom'd by them all;

And cordially, indeed, by Theodore :
His grateful bosom felt the benefit
The faithful youth had wish'd him, and perform'd.
Maria smil'd on Seymour, sweetly gay ;
And for each word at random she bestow'd,
She seem'd resolv'd to give a score to him ;
Or, if the opportunity was lost,
A smile would ever make the full amends ;
A sweet excuse for inclination's will,
Denied the power of consoling speech.
'Twas late, and, as the evening drew in,
It was propos'd by Mountague to rise.
They all agreed : but Clareson's offer'd hand
Was not accepted by the wary maid,
Who had secur'd on one side Theodore,
And made a sign for Seymour to secure
The other, fearing Clareson should request it.
He was dejected at her seeming wish
To foil each opportunity that came,
And more than once broke silence as they went,
Complaining of neglect ; tho' in a tone
That seem'd to wish it might appear in jest ;
But fully it appear'd to Mountague.
He had suspicion of the whole affair ;
So thought it now the very point of time
To put the final stop he had prepar'd ;
And which Maria had before resign'd
(Unseen by any) for the same intent.

“Come, come,” said he, “if you’re so very fond
“Of walking with a lady, arm in arm,
“Here’s one whom you may carry in your hand :
“Here is her mother’s portrait : ’tis profest
“To be a good resemblance : ’tis a chance
“She had not given it a parting look
“But two days since : indeed, so strange a thing
“Occur’d that morning, that I must relate it.
“She had (as usual) that fine summer’s morn,
“On the green bank in yonder shady grove,
“Sat down to read, when on a sudden leapt
“A man in horrid vizor o’er the hedge.
“Her gold he ask’d with many dreadful threats,
“And held a pistol to her trembling breast.
“Her purse he snatch’d—

“And at the instant, I,”

Said Seymour, with an honest energy,
(Expressive of his rapture at the thought,)
“I came behind the villain, and my blow
“Drove the base coward from his fancied prey.
“Pardon the interruption, dearest Sir ;
“But when I think ’twas I who chas’d the wretch,
“And rescued her from insult, O, I bless
“The happy chance which led me to the spot !”
“My thanks are far too poor a recompence,”
Said noble Mountague with kindest smile :
“But to proceed : That morning, gentlemen,
“Some two hours after, was the picture sent,

“ Wrapt in a score of papers, as you see.
“ This is the shape in which it came, and these
“ The different papers which surrounded it,
“ On which no word in writing can be found,
“ By which means we might trace the guilty wretch.
“ See me look over them, now, one by one;
“ And look yourselves if any word appear,
“ From which a faint idea we may draw
“ To fix a justifiable suspicion.”

He took them off, and having once more look'd
On each side carefully before them all,
He laid them (for as yet no word appear'd)
Far distant by themselves. And now behold
With staring eye, and accent menacing,
He reads aloud, and shews the guilty name,
“ Charles Raymond.”

Each articulates the words
In various tones, impell'd by various causes.
In accent loud, amid surprise and shame,
Clarefon and Moore re-echo to the sound.
The name brought back the deed to memory,
And sweet Maria fainted at the words.
Seymour repeats the name in rage, but sees
Maria faint, and catches in his arms
The lovely burthen. Albert in a look
Darted far more than words could have express'd.
Constantio stood astonish'd to observe
So just an act of Providence, and saw

Raymond in guilty terror stand aghast,
Amaz'd to think what carelessness had wrought :
While Mountague with solemn wave forbad
Each of the three in future to appear
Within his dwelling. More he did not say,
As words could ne'er have given that reproach
Contempt so justly shew'd : for all he wish'd
Was to convince his son with what a crew
Of harden'd and unprincipled young men
He had, alas ! associated till now ;
And this with filial tenderness he own'd,
And thank'd, and blest him for his generous care.
In silent shame the gamesters slowly mov'd,
And slunk away, confusion on their brows.
And now congratulations quick went round.
The cordial shake : th' affectionate salute
Of love fraternal by Maria given,
He beg'd might pass throughout the company.
“ Blessings upon thy head, my darling child ! ”
Said Albert, as he took the pious kiss ;
“ May God reward thy sweet humility
“ On earth, and then exalt you to himself ! ”
To Seymour's turn it came : with modest step
He met the lovely maid, and took the kiss
That trembled on her lip. O, ye who seek
Amid the fancied joys of lawless love,
An airy phantom of deluded brain,
Thinking 'tis pleasure that ye so pursue,

Turn from the path, in virtue's sacred road
Pursue the bliss, and real bliss enjoy !
And now assembled sat the cheerful crew,
Commanding from the parlour window op'd
The sweet surrounding view, a charming scene !
The moon in silver lustre, ev'ry star
In splendor shining, shew'd divinely grand ;
And now the mirthful tale, the merry song,
In social unanimity went round,
And seem'd to banish ev'ry gloomy thought
That mem'ry might retain : And now aloud
Resounds the mansion gate with weighty force ;
Bright shone the silver harness on the steeds ;
Four such as seldom may at once be view'd
Drawing a burthen of such real worth.
'Tis not the coach I mean, tho' that was lin'd
With silk in highest elegance of taste,
With silver fringe, and lace extremely rich ;
But from the carriage the gay owner walk'd ;
A woman not yet past the bloom of life,
Yet such a graceful majesty of gait
Accompanied each motion, every eye
Was lost in wonder at the female stranger.
Ere she had gain'd the door, a gentleman
Stept from the carriage, offering his hand
To a young damsel splendidly attir'd,
And beautiful as Venus is pourtray'd.
They were announc'd as strangers, but receiv'd

With that kind hospitality that mark'd
The character of gen'rous Mountague.
Scarce had she yet observ'd each diff'rent face
That sat around the room, when suddenly
She sprang from off her chair, and Albert's hand
Affectionately grasp'd: "Tell me," said she,
"Thou venerable, good, belov'd old man,
"Tell me, does Seymour, does my son yet live?
"Answer me, yes: O! quickly make me blest
"With the dear sound; or by a downcast look,
"Bid me expect what would renew that woe
"You once beheld while for a shelter pleading,
"To the wild fury of the storm expos'd."
She turn'd to Mountague, and thus she spoke:
"Pardon me, noble Sir; my history
"Will best excuse (if it should need excuse)
"This seeming strange behaviour: 'Tis my son,
"Who twenty years has been with Albert left,
"(If fate has not cut off my dearest joy,) H
"I come once more to seek. My Seymour lives;
"O, say the word, and make a mother blest."



P A R T VIII.

Happily I have arriv'd at last
Unto the wish'd haven of my bliss.

Shakespeare.

I mark'd his desultory pace,
His gestures strange, and varying face,
With many a mutter'd sound:
And ah! too late aghast I view'd
The reeking blade, the hand embru'd;
He fell, and groaning grasp'd in agony the ground.

T. Warton.

Guilt is the source of sorrow; 'tis the fiend,
Th' avenging fiend, that follows us behind
With whips and stings. The blest know none of this;
But rest in everlasting peace of mind,
And find the height of all their heaven is goodness.

River.

“HE lives!” in wildest ecstasy of joy,
Seymour exclaim'd: “Behold him at your feet.”
“Do I, indeed, a mother’s blessing ask?
“Am I again permitted to behold
“The author of my being? to conceive
“The bliss that absence makes us to enjoy,
“When long-lost friends return?”

“My dearest son!”

Affectionately raising him, she cried,
The tears of transport starting from her eye;

- " A thousand, thousand blessings I implore
" Upon the heads of these thy gen'rous friends ;
" Particularly to my kind old host ;
" And on thy head may God his blessings shower !
" Making thee bear thy fortunes as becomes
" A man, a son, a brother, and a Christian.
" Thy father is impatient to embrace
" The eldest pledge of our unminish'd love.
" Thy sister, too, is anxious to behold
" A brother, who has been my constant theme
" Since riches chang'd the scene. I wish'd for thee ;
" But, ah ! some thousand miles were we apart.
" To India's soil thy father owes his wealth ;
" His wealth, with industry and honest toil,
" Long sought for, and, a just reward, obtain'd.
" We came to England ; and the gaudy change
" Invited friends whose doors had all been shut
" When poverty accompanied my steps
" To seek a scanty aid to raise the debt
" For which my husband in a prison lay :
" His father heard, and on the bed of death
" Implor'd forgiveness ; soon was it obtain'd ;
" And in his will he left my Seymour heir
" To all his vast possessions. Then we sought
" The mansion of *my* father. He had long
" Paid the great debt to nature. In his will
" A nephew, he intended for his heir,
" Having displeas'd him highly in his life,

“ Was disinherited ; his daughter's name
“ Inferted in his stead. And now, my son,
“ Ask me whate'er thou wilt, that wealth can give,
“ Or my poor pow'r in any way beside,
“ As some return for all the kindness shewn thee,
“ From tender infancy to rip'ning years ;
“ And more true joy than can description paint,
“ My grateful bosom will enraptur'd feel.
“ But first let me thus publicly repay,
“ In tenfold number, that most gen'rous loan
“ That gain'd my Seymour's liberty. Receive
“ A portion of that recompence I wish ;
“ My tears must pay the rest, my wealth can
never.”

It now was Albert's turn to check the tear
Prepar'd for starting down his furrow'd cheek :
He dar'd resist ; but, ah ! the angry frown
Seem'd to prepare its all-subduing power ;
He took the purse ; she prest his aged hand,
And kist it thrice ; he turn'd aside to weep.

Seymour look'd round ; he sometimes thought
he saw
Constantio's eye in fondest rapture gaze
On his fair sister ; still 'twas hard to tell
How far the youth was smitten ; yet he wish'd
The soft impression might have reach'd his heart,

And taught his eye to own the maiden's power.
And now (did fancy partially suggest,
Or was the mutual glance perceptible?)
He thought he saw the maid with bashful smile,
Watch ev'ry motion of Constantio,
And oft return a look as fond, as kind,
As when their eyes had met, she gain'd from him.
"To name a wish," he tenderly replied,
"Were to be discontent with happiness,
"To be indeed dissatisfy'd with bliss.
"The orphan mourns no more a parent's loss;
"His only wish was once again to see
"To whom he ow'd his duty, filial love,
"And fond attention; to repay the cares
"His infant years has cost them; to requite
"Their kind anxiety, and make old age
"As truly happy as the prime of life;
"A just return for tenderness bestow'd
"When childhood needed all the parent's care.
"The orphan's only wish is gratify'd;
"He dare not wish again. The time may come
"(If his dear parents will permit him then)
"That he will claim the privilege with joy,
"And ask a boon which they with joy will grant."
His eye now met Constantio's, now the maid's;
And each display'd the ray of tranquil joy;
Beneath which ray he thought he could discern
The faint, yet sparkling, fire of rising hope.

As the wet mariner, who, cast on shore,
Thinks afar off he sees the welcome shape
Of some assisting vessel, now his eye
Darts the bright beam of animated hope,
Which slowly faints dejected in despair,
When the consoling prospect is no more ;
The subject dropt, and supper now was serv'd ;
Withdrawn from which, the company were shewn
Respective chambers ; for their noble host
Resolv'd they should not from his house depart,
Till a design, he long had had in view,
Was by unanimous consent accomplish'd.
This he declar'd, he would not then unfold,
Fearing to break their rest. The morrow come,
He would before them all aloud propose
The project that would bless his future days.

Did'st thou, old man, forget thy days of love ?
Thought'st thou to lull the bosom to repose,
Where tedious doubt, ungratify'd suspense,
Sat ever roving to the varied thought,
That fertile fancy, in succession quick,
Impatiently suggested to the mind ?
Did'st thou not mark bright beaming in the eye,
An eversparkling ray of hope, to hear
The resolution which concern'd them all ?
The bounding heart, with expectation high,
Ne'er sinks to rest while buoy'd by anxious doubt.
The morning dawn'd ; and, e'er the tell-tale clock

Had sham'd the lazy youths with eight reproofs,
The damsels both arose, and, arm in arm,
Tap'd a good-morrow at the bolted door,
And hasten'd down the breakfast to prepare.
And now around the table all were met,
All formal ceremony disappear'd,
And social chat made sweet the frequent sip;
When Mountague was beckon'd from the room
By one with terror pictur'd in his face,
Who seem'd possess'd of scarcely pow'r to speak,
So much affected by the horrid scene
He had been witness to. He thus disclos'd
The cause of his unmannerly intrusion.
A youth, whom yesterday he had remark'd
Among the company in friendly talk,
Had, in a seeming phrenzy of despair,
Fall'n victim to unmanly suicide.
"He lies," said he, "before the garden hedge.
"I heard him say these words; but could not stay
"His well-directed hand. The deed was done;
"But still the words re-echo'd to mine ear."
"Fond fool! who thought in gaming to be blest!
"Once I was innocent; now guilt so thick
"Glogs my foul soul, the thought of what I've
"been
"Spurs me to finish life and woe at once.
"Come, fatal tube, the gamester's last resource,
"And lull contending passions to repose.

"What have I said? is there repose in death?
"Repose for villains, tranquil and serene?
"Ah! no—remorse will sting, the conscience wound,
"And suicide will still increase my crimes.
"But yet to live in endless infamy!
"Can I support it? never, I'm resolv'd.
"This calmer, Theodore, was meant for thee:
"But, foil'd in each attempt, I take revenge,
"And thus reward the careless negligence
"Which makes me what I am." "He op'd his
"mouth,

"The trigger pull'd, and fell a lifeless corpse."

Albert and Theodore alone were call'd;
For it was Mountague's most strict command
No lady should accompany their steps.

"This day," said he, "shall not be overcast
"By clouds which such a dreadful sight would raise.
"Duty bids us acquaint the wretched Sire,
"And send the corpse with decency to him:
"But when I think the purport of his speech,
"E'er he completed his design—I try
"Shudd'ring to blot remembrance from my mind."

They went; and where the servant pointed out,
Beheld the mangled visage, scarce a trace
Of those strong features Raymond once possess;
But by his dress they recogniz'd the youth.
Albert bless'd God for Theodore's escape;
In which both he and his dear father join'd;

And while the servant bore the corpse away,
They fought once more the parlour: there they
found
Constantio and Matilda deep engag'd
In that most interesting *tête-a-tête*
That lovers know, who, fearing to explain
Each wish, or fond emotion of the heart,
Prolong that sad suspense they wish to cure.
Her kind indulgent mother had withdrawn
With fair Maria to assist the scheme
That, from the time she heard her Seymour own
Constantio's faithful friendship, had prevail'd
O'er ev'ry thought within her gen'rous breast.
The youth had hinted 'twas his only wish
To be his Seymour's brother; and the maid,
While modest blushes spread her lovely cheek,
Had fram'd the kindest answer; which, alas!
Was by their entrance now abruptly check'd.
Both seem'd displeas'd, altho' but slightly shewn,
At interruption so unseasonable;
Yet wish'd to hide the gentle frown, unwilling
Their sweet confusion should be known to all:
But Mountague observ'd the timid glance
That, on their entrance, shot from either eye;
And thought he now might sift the tender cause,
And publish his proposal. With a smile,
That ever deck'd his cheerful rev'rend brow,
He turn'd to Albert, Seymour, and his son:

"We should apologize, intruding thus ;

"We have disturb'd, I fear," continued he,

"The converse we can never benefit.

"Old men are sad intruders!"

"Say not so,

"My father," said Constantio. "I am sure

"You never can appear but to increase

"Whatever pleasure might before have reign'd.

"I know not that," replied the good old man :

"Youth can find converse suited to itself,

"Far better than when age, with graver face,

"Obtrudes its serious voice. The tender smile

"The unrestrain'd, tho' innocent, discourse;

"The mutual glance; the seizure of the hand,

"Which gently, yet reluctantly, resists ;

"Love's tender phrases, terrified by age,

"Are chang'd to studied and unnat'ral terms.

"The smiles are banish'd ; and with downcast eye

"In monosyllables the converse ends.

"This is the picture : but high heav'n forbid

"I should o'ercloud that mild serenity

"Which mark'd the prospect e'er I op'd the door !

"I am no list'ner ; yet have I observ'd

"What fills my breast with gladness ; and I think

"I come, my children, messenger of joy.

"Transporting tidings from a father's mouth

"Attentive hear ; and when assembled all,

" If I offend, let the offended plead,
" Or sweetly blush assent." The door he op'd!
Matilda's mother gracefully advanc'd
Between Constantio and the lovely maid.
She gave Maria to her father's hand,
Who (unsuspected) plac'd her, unperceiv'd,
On his right-hand, and Seymour on his left.
" Be this," he cried, " my only wish on earth!
" To see my daughter wedded to the youth
" Unrival'd goodness tells me to revere.
" Unrival'd! yes, belov'd Constantio;
" Thy goodness equals his; but friendship's ties
" Precludes the thought of envy. May I live
" To see this maid the partner of my son;
" And by this double marriage bless the days
" Which yet remain for Mountague! My son!
" My Theodore, I still am blest in thee:
" Thou hast perceiv'd the perils of the path
" To which thou wert ensnar'd; thou art restor'd
" Repenting to a doating father's arms,
" Who watch'd thy steps with deep anxiety.
" But, next to God, to this belov'd old man,
" To him, my son's deliverer, am I bound
" In obligation ne'er to be repaid."
" This scene repays me," cheerfully replied
The pious Albert: " more I cannot wish.
" I see my dear adopted Seymour blest;
" I see his friend, my lov'd Constantio, too,

" Partake the heav'nly blessing, I behold
 " The once poor pleading wand'rer at my door,
 " (Whose virtues fortify'd her noble heart
 " To bear the keen attack of poignant grief,)
 " Rais'd to that rank her excellence deserv'd.
 " I have beheld the punishment of vice,
 " And seen the triumph native virtue won.
 " The eye will stray, delusion's outward shew
 " Attracts; and curiosity prevails;
 " But if the heart remain unblemish'd still,
 " One moment of reflection awes the soul,
 " And makes it shrink from th' approaching dan-
 " ger.
 " O then how truly glorious the defeat,
 " When reason and advice can overcome
 " The artful and persuasive tongue of vice,
 " And from hypocrisy pull off the mask!
 " Now Albert gives the word for gen'ral joy,
 " If the decree Lord Mountague has made
 " Meet gen'ral approbation."

From no tongue
 Fell a denial to the kind consent
 That glow'd in modest blushes on the cheek;
 Their hands the happy parents gladly join'd;
 Each ardent youth now seiz'd his destin'd bride,
 And seal'd the solemn contract with a kiss.
 Tender embraces, tributes of esteem,

The tear of joy, parental bliss bestow'd.
Heart felt delight at virtue's victory,
Old Albert's eyes bedew'd; and all around
Own'd willingly the sympathetic power.
Seymour confess the boon he meant to ask
Was for Constantio fair Matilda's hand.
Constantio look'd a recompense. His smile
First on the charming maid, on Seymour then
Shone forth replete with grateful tendernefs.
Time seem'd to creep till the blest day arriv'd,
Uniting to the loveliest of maids
The worthiest of youths.

Long may they live!
Their parents chiefest blessings. May they feel
The rapture to behold their offspring rise
To virtue's path! and thus the blessing reap
Reserv'd the just reward of filial love.
May ev'ry youth allur'd (beneath the mask
Of tempting pleasure) by the snares of vice,
Think on the vast escape of Theodore,
And at the impulse of repentance stop;
Start back with horror at the dreadful view
Of the abyss of overwhelming guilt,
And kiss with transport the assisting hand
Stretch'd out to save him from impending ruin!

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B. admired,

admired,

2 A CRITICAL DISSERTATION

admired, and what pleasures they pursued, before those refinements of society had taken place, which enlarge indeed, and diversify the transactions, but disguise the manners of mankind.

Besides this merit, which ancient poems have with philosophical observers of human nature, they have another with persons of taste. They promise some of the highest beauties of poetical writing. Irregular and unpolished we may expect the productions of uncultivated ages to be; but abounding, at the same time, with that enthusiasm, that vehemence and fire, which are the soul of poetry. For many circumstances of those times which we call barbarous, are favourable to the poetical spirit. That state, in which human nature shoots wild and free, though unfit for other improvements, certainly encourages the high exertions of fancy and passion.

In the infancy of societies, men live scattered and dispersed, in the midst of solitary rural scenes, where the beauties of nature are their chief entertainment. They meet with many objects, to them new and strange; their wonder and surprize are frequently excited; and by the sudden changes of fortune occurring in their unsettled state of life, their passions are raised to the utmost. Their passions have nothing to restrain them: their imagination has nothing to check it. They display themselves to one another without disguise: and converse and act in the uncovered simplicity of nature. As their feelings are strong, so their language, of itself, assumes a poetical turn. Prone to exaggerate, they

they describe every thing in the strongest colours; which of course renders their speech picturesque and figurative. Figurative language owes its rise chiefly to two causes; to the want of proper names for objects, and to the influence of imagination and passion over the form of expression. Both these causes concur in the infancy of society. Figures are commonly considered as artificial modes of speech, devised by orators and poets, after the world had advanced to a refined state. The contrary of this is the truth. Men never have used so many figures of style, as in those rude ages, when, besides the power of a warm imagination to suggest lively images, the want of proper and precise terms for the ideas they would express, obliged them to have recourse to circumlocution, metaphor, comparison, and all those substituted forms of expression, which give a poetical air to language. An American chief, at this day, harangues at the head of his tribe, in a more bold metaphorical style, than a modern European would adventure to use in an Epic poem.

In the progress of society, the genius and manners of men undergo a change more favourable to accuracy than to sprightliness and sublimity. As the world advances, the understanding gains ground upon the imagination; the understanding is more exercised; the imagination, less. Fewer objects occur that are new or surprizing. Men apply themselves to trace the causes of things; they correct and refine one another; they subdue or disguise their passions; they form their exterior man-

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ners upon one uniform standard of politeness and civility. Human nature is pruned according to method and rule. Language advances from sterility to copiousness, and at the same time, from fervour and enthusiasm, to correctness and precision. Style becomes more chaste; but less animated. The progress of the world in this respect resembles the progress of age in man. The powers of imagination are most vigorous and predominant in youth; those of the understanding ripen more slowly, and often attain not their maturity, till the imagination begin to flag. Hence, poetry, which is the child of imagination, is frequently most glowing and animated in the first ages of society. As the ideas of our youth are remembered with a peculiar pleasure on account of their liveliness and vivacity: so the most ancient poems have often proved the greatest favourites of nations.

Poetry has been said to be more ancient than prose: and however paradoxical such an assertion may seem, yet, in a qualified sense, it is true. Men certainly never conversed with one another in regular numbers; but even their ordinary language would, in ancient times, for the reasons before assigned, approach to a poetical style; and the first compositions transmitted to posterity, beyond doubt, were, in a literal sense, poems; that is, compositions in which imagination had the chief hand, formed into some kind of numbers, and pronounced with a musical modulation or tone. Musick or songs has been found coeval with
with

with society among the most barbarous nations. The only subjects which could prompt men, in their first rude state, to utter their thoughts in compositions of any length, were such as naturally assumed the tone of poetry; praises of their gods, or of their ancestors; commemorations of their own warlike exploits; or lamentations over their misfortunes. And before writing was invented, no other compositions, except songs or poems, could take such hold of the imagination and memory, as to be preserved by oral tradition, and handed down from one race to another.

Hence we may expect to find poems among the antiquities of all nations. It is probable too, that an extensive search would discover a certain degree of resemblance among all the most ancient poetical productions, from whatever country they have proceeded. In a similar state of manners, similar objects and passions operating upon the imaginations of men, will stamp their productions with the same general character. Some diversity will; no doubt, be occasioned by climate and genius. But mankind never bear such resembling features, as they do in the beginnings of society. Its subsequent revolutions give rise to the principal distinctions among nations; and divert, into channels widely separated, that current of human genius and manners, which descends originally from one spring. What we have been long accustomed to call the oriental vein of poetry, because some of the earliest poetical productions have come to us from the East, is probably no more

6 A CRITICAL DISSERTATION

oriental than occidental; it is characteristical of an age rather than a country; and belongs, in some measure, to all nations at a certain period. Of this the works of Ossian seem to furnish a remarkable proof.

Our present subject leads us to investigate the ancient poetical remains, not so much of the east, or of the Greeks and Romans, as of the northern nations; in order to discover whether the Gothic poetry has any resemblance to the Celtic or Galic, which we are about to consider. Though the Goths, under which name we usually comprehend all the Scandinavian tribes, were a people altogether fierce and martial, and noted, to a proverb, for their ignorance of the liberal arts, yet they too, from the earliest times, had their poets and their songs. Their poets were distinguished by the title of *Scalders*, and their songs were termed *Vyses*. *

Saxo

* Olaus Wormius, in the appendix to his *Treatise de Literatura Runica*, has given a particular account of the Gothic poetry, commonly called Runic, from *Runes*, which signifies the Gothic letters. He informs us that there were no fewer than 136 different kinds of measure or verse used in their *Vyses*; and though we are accustomed to call rhyme a Gothic invention, he says expressly, that among all these measures, rhyme, or correspondence of final syllables, was never employed. He analyses the structure of one of these kinds of verse, that in which the poem of Lodbrog, afterwards quoted, is written; which exhibits a very singular species of harmony, if it can be allowed that name, depending neither upon rhyme nor upon metrical feet, or quantity of syllables, but chiefly upon the number of the syllable, and the disposition of the

the

Saxo Grammaticus, a Danish Historian of considerable note, who flourished in the thirteenth century,

the letters. In every stanza was an equal number of lines: in every line six syllables. In each distich, it was requisite that three words should begin with the same letter; two of the corresponding words placed in the first line of the distich, the third, in the second line. In each line were also required two syllables, but never the final ones, formed either of the same consonants, or same vowels. As an example of this measure, Olaus gives us these two Latin lines constructed exactly according to the above rules of Runic verse;

Christus caput nostrum
Coronet te bonis.

The initial letters of Christus, Caput and Coronet, make the three corresponding letters of the distich. In the first line, the first syllables of Christus and of nostrum; in the second line, the *on* in coronet and in bonis make the requisite correspondence of syllables. Frequent inversions and transpositions were permitted in this poetry; which would naturally follow from such laborious attention to the collocation of words.

The curious on this subject may consult likewise Dr. Hicks's *Thesaurus Linguarum Septentrionalium*; particularly the 23d chapter of his *Grammatica Anglo Saxonica & Mæso Gothica*; where they will find a full account of the structure of the Anglo-Saxon verse, which nearly resembled the Gothic. They will find also some specimens both of Gothic and Saxon poetry. An extract, which Dr. Hicks has given from the work of one of the Danish Scalders,

century, informs us that very many of these songs, containing the ancient traditionary stories of the country, were found engraven upon rocks in the old Runic character; several of which he has translated into Latin, and inserted into his History. But his versions are plainly so paraphrastical, and forced into such an imitation of the style and the measures of the Roman poets, that one can form no judgment from them of the native spirit of the original. A more curious monument of the true Gothic poetry is preserved by Olaus Wormius in his book de *Literatura Runica*. It is an *Epicedium*, or funeral song, composed by Regner Lodbrog; and translated by Olaus, word for word, from the original. This Lodbrog was a king of Denmark, who lived in the eighth century, famous for his wars and victories; and at the same time an eminent *Scalder* or poet. It was his misfortune to fall at last into the hands of one of his enemies, by whom he was thrown into prison, and condemned to be destroyed by serpents. In this situation he solaced himself with rehearsing all the exploits of his life. The poem is divided into twenty-nine stanzas, of ten lines each; and every stanza begins with these words, *Pugnavimus Ensis*, We have fought with our swords. Olaus's version is in many places so obscure as to be hardly intelligible. I have subjoined the whole below, exactly as he has published it; and shall translate as

Scalders, entitled, *Hervarer Saga*, containing an evocation from the dead, may be found in the 6th volume of *Miscellany Poems*, published by Mr. Dryden.

much

much as may give the English reader an idea of the spirit and strain of this kind of poetry. *

" We have fought with our swords.---I was
" young, when, towards the east, in the bay of
" Oreon,

* 1.

Pugnâvimus Ensis
Haud post longum tempus
Cum in Gotlandia accessimus
An serpentis immensi necem
Tunc impetravimus Thoram
Ex hoc vocarunt me virum
Quod serpentem transfodi
Hirsutam braccam ob illam cedem
Cuspide ictum intuli in colubrum
Ferro lucidorum stipendiorum.

2.

Multum juvenis fui quando acquisivimus
Orientem versus in Oreonico freto
Vulnerum amnes avidæ feræ
Et flavipedi avi
Accepimus ibidem sonuerunt
Ad sublimes galeas
Dura ferra magnam escam
Omnis erat oceanus vulnus
Vadavit corvus in sanguine Cæforum.

3.

Alte tulimus tunc lanceas
Quando viginti annos numeravimus
Et celebrem laudem comparavimus passim
Vicimus octo barones
In oriente ante Dimini portum
Aquilæ impetravimus tunc sufficientem
Hospitii sumptum in illa frage
Sudor decedit in vulnere
Oceao perdidit exercitus ætatem.

4.

Pugnæ facta copia
Cum Helsingianos postulavimus

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Ad